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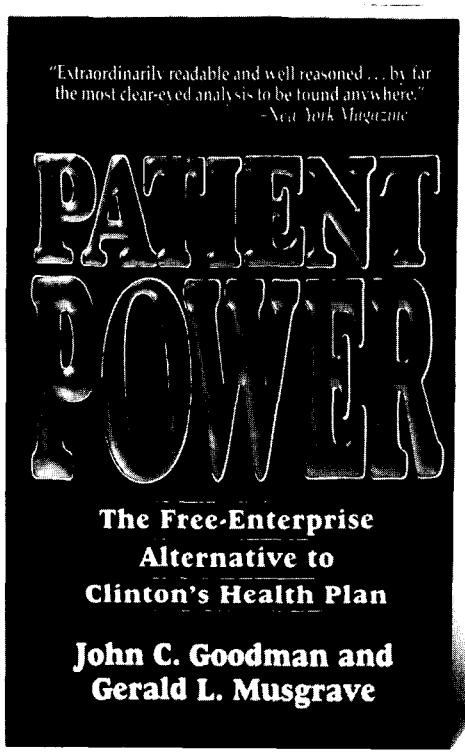
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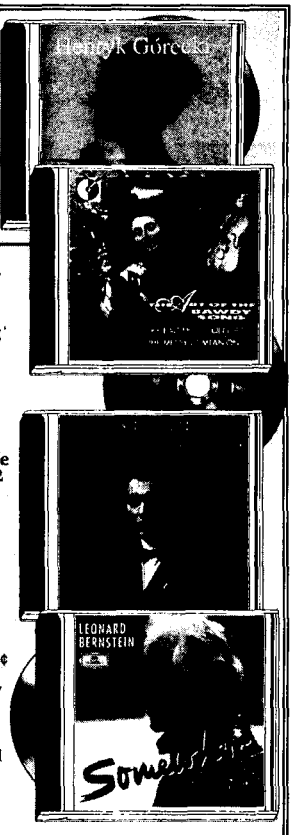

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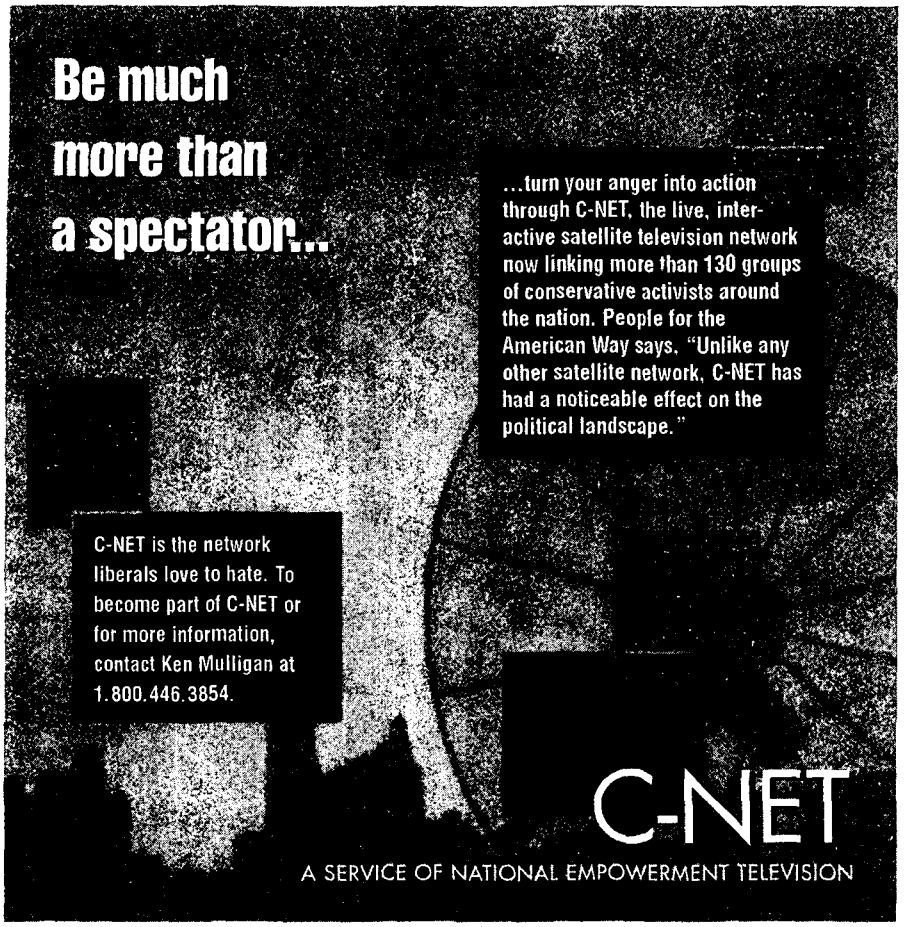
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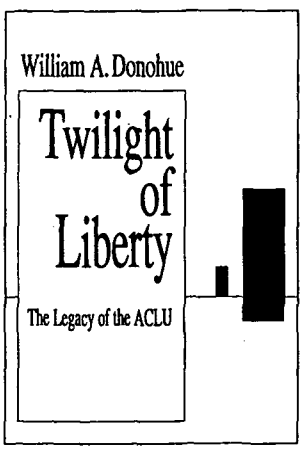

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Volume 27 Number 2, February 1994
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The American Spectator (ISSN 0148-8414 is published monthly at 2020 N. 14th Street, Suite 750, Arlington, Virginia 22216. Printed in U.S.A. Second class postage paid at Arlington, Virginia, and additional mailing offices. One-year subscription is $35. Vol. 27, No. 2. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: The American Spectator, P.O. Box 657, Mt. Morris, Illinois 61054.

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ABOUT THIS MONTH

by

Wladyslaw Pleszczynski

ON HIS WAY TO THE LAND of dead souls, President Clinton put his head on Dan Rather's shoulder and sniffed, apropos of the pending Whitewater investigations, "Not a single soul has alleged that I've done anything wrong." Using words he picked up in college, George Stephanopoulos said, "There have been no credible allegations of wrongdoing by the Clintons in this matter." Asked by Sam Donaldson whether no man is above the law, Al Gore slowly shot back, "The premise of the question is that there's some wrongdoing or may well be some wrongdoing. There hasn't been." Paul Begala was no less determined to remain in the dark, telling Bernard Shaw, "Now, you have a situation where there are no charges, there are no allegations . . . " Even the suddenly foxy Rep. Jim Leach told Shaw, "We do not have to go down any sort of criminal path." But what if we do? There are charges, there are allegations, there is alleged wrongdoing. Our distinguished law firm of many years' standing has compiled a working list of possible criminal violations by Clinton et al. (See page 16.) It's the kind of information we'd know by heart if the names of the principals were, say, E. Robert Wallach and Edwin Meese.

MEANWHILE, REPLACE THE NAMES of Jim McDougal and Bill Clinton with those of Don Dixon and Jim Wright, or Charles Keating and any of the Keating Five, and you'll understand some of the implications of James Ring Adams's pioneering investigation of the Whitewater-Madison mess (see page 49). Until he evidently found better backers, Mr. Clinton served as McDougal's political fixer—and, as Mr. Adams reports, often at the expense of the little guy. Hate to disappoint those who are calling Whitewater Hillary's scandal, but it remains Bill's no less than Troopergate.

"WHAT HEALTH-CARE CRISIS?" has become part of the nation's landscape; a battle-cry first sounded in these pages last spring by Fred Barnes. This month Mr. Barnes again defines the terms of the next great health-care debate as he knocks down the notion that health costs are out of control (see page 36). Where markets exist, inflation keeps dropping dramatically, and the administration is fuming. Even as it promises the sky it needs that sky to be falling, which is why Bill Clinton felt so at home in post-earthquake Los Angeles, enrolling thousands upon thousands in federal welfare projects.

NEED I ADD that this is John Corry's issue? His inside-the-Pentagon inquiry into missing MIAs is a stunning triumph, as the coming months will make plain (see page 26). And don't miss his new book (reviewed by Andrew Ferguson on page 86), the most engaging and moving memoir I've read in years.

P.S. The sensitive nature of our ongoing investigative reporting has wreaked havoc with our publishing schedule. Our apologies to all readers—and to Byron York, whose hilarious send-up of the *New York Times Book Review*'s coverage of Clinton-era memoirs (see page 58) was ready to go right after Thanksgiving, when it might still have been thought wildly futuristic!

Is Reality Optional?
and other essays
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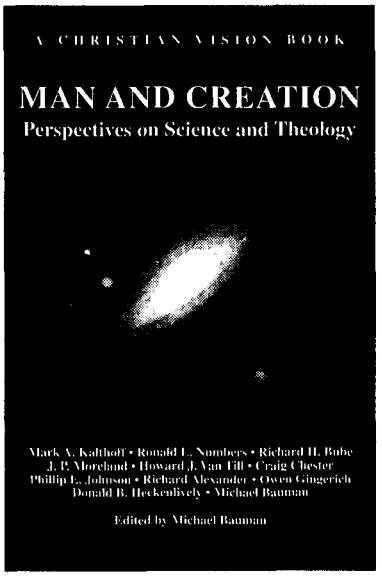

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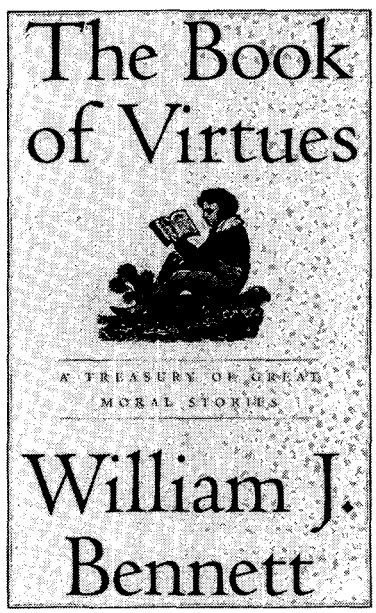

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"*The Book of Virtues* is built on an old philosophical principle nearly forgotten in the public discussion (and in certain recent presidential campaigns), but it is an idea I have long championed: Character matters. What a concept! But beware — some of the lessons in this book are rooted in religion, which means the anthology will be ruled unconstitutional if carried into an American school.

It belongs, however, in every home. *The Book of Virtues* is a superb collection, certain to fortify you and yours for a lifetime of morality, goodness, and right thinking."

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A look into the account books of Madison Guaranty, the S&L run into the ground by Clinton pal James McDougal, shows that the president has more to hide than anyone suspected.

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A partial list, compiled by Solitary, Poor, Nasty, Brutish & Short.

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A potpourri from a fallen administration, by Byron York

Cover illustration by Ismael Roldán. Interior art by John Springs, Ismael Roldán, and Jake Tapper.

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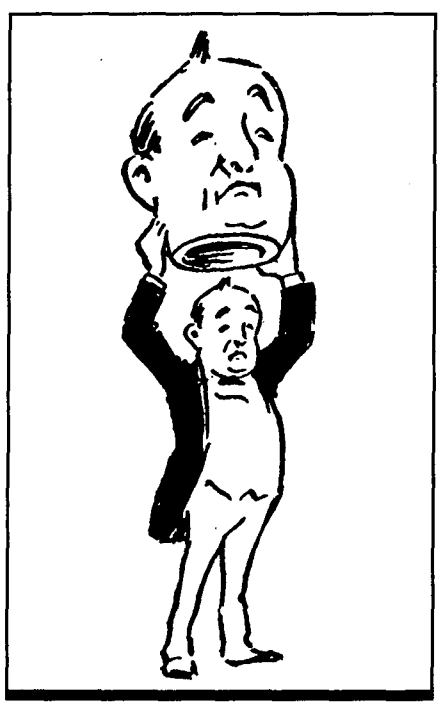
Nineteen ninety-three is a dodo, and as it gave way to 1994 a cacophony of outraged voices sounded off against this ancient intellectual review and defender of Art—namely the art of self-defense. What evoked the opprobrium was Mr. David Brock's report in *The American Spectator* last month that the President of the United States has in recent years been acting as though it were forever springtime and he was a youthful resident of Monkey Island at the zoo. Moreover, Our President has been lamentably heavy-handed in his use of government personnel and facilities to cover up his scortatory dering-do. In publishing this piece, the snoots complain, *The American Spectator* has lowered its journalistic standards. Actually, it is President Bill Clinton's high jinks that imperil *The American Spectator*'s standards, and we have grown quite cross with him for this. Never before has our print schedule been repeatedly delayed, so much so that this department cannot report on the momentous events of the previous month. Rather we shall endeavor to chronicle momentous events at year's end. We shall be in the same uncertain condition next month and perhaps thereafter—all deadlines in the foreseeable future will be decided by our crack team of investigative reporters now in Little Rock, intent on sending back in timely fashion the facts about Whitewatergate, funny money at the Madison Guaranty Savings and Loan, and other possible high crimes and misdemeanors.

• On the last weekend of the year, 1,000 boutique-bought jogging suits congregated at Hilton Head Island, South Carolina for the twelfth annual Renaissance Weekend. Mrs. Linda Lader, wife of the spectacle's eminent founder, explained the event as a time to "get away from the crowds and pressures of life and reflect on what is important to us," such as gaudy colored jogging suits, sweatless tennis matches and biking exhibitions, and seminars where the Immensities are thrown about by such intellectual giants as Mr. Dick Schaap, the modern-day Montesquieu who has authored *Steinbrenner!*, among other sports biographies. The president and his lovely wife Hillary were there, and while North Korea continued to stiff the State Department over the whereabouts of its nuclear arsenals and while Russian hostilities proliferated, Our President attended lectures on such indispensable topics as "What Have I Learned from Love." (Do not tell us, Mr. President.)

• In Denver, Colorado, death threats against Santa Claus forced the corpulent gentleman to flee shopping centers and confer with children only at heavily guarded police stations. The threats came in letters signed by "Terminator WX," who claims to be a Vietnam war veteran willing to shoot Mr. Claus "right between the eyes." Authorities have not ruled out the possibility that there is no Terminator WX. Certainly he is not listed in the Denver telephone book or on the faculty of any of the city's venerable universities. That theft of an atheist group's godless banner from a holiday display at the town hall in Wyckoff, New Jersey, is going to be prosecuted as a "hate crime" against religion, according to Bergen County Prosecutor and moral ham Mr. John J. Fahy. "A non-belief is considered a religion, also," the dunce informed his local newspaper. In Los Angeles, California, twenty-five fun-loving sheriff's deputies were suspended without pay for lighting a bonfire and holding a beer bash while on standby duty during the late Malibu wildfires. On January 17, an earthquake measuring 6.6 on the Richter scale wobbled the city, killing dozens. Washington's prestigious Media Research Center gave its yearly awards for the most inane and bigoted journalism of the year, and the awards were again dominated by Messrs. Dan Rather and Bryant Gumbel, two of the most outspoken voices on behalf of human justice on Manhattan's Upper East Side and men perfectly capable of taking to the hills to lead America's sorely oppressed peasants, consumerists, and homosexuals in violent Revolution once their hiking boots arrive from L.L. Bean.



• Weeks after admitting that there were indeed documents relating to the Clintons' involvement in the Whitewater real-estate scheme taken from the White House office of the late Mr. Vince Foster, and after failing to deliver them to the proper authorities, the Clintons asked that the mysterious documents be subpoenaed and that a special counsel be appointed by Attorney General Janet Reno. In Indianapolis, Indiana, Miss Patricia Conner, 47, received a suspended sentence for attempting to avoid prosecution for forgery by eating a check, thus freeing her to serve the Clinton administration in any of several roles that have need of her talents. Former Clinton aide Betsey Wright, according to the *Los Angeles Times*, is reviewing her personal

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papers in preparation for answering a subpoena. Try putting a dab of tabasco sauce on them, Miss Wright.

• In Tokyo, Japan, Mr. Masahiro Sagawa, a cook, won more than $900 at the thirteenth annual Year-End Shouting Contest, his message being the rather beautiful and compassionate line "The pants I just bought were ripped." Mr. Sagawa was recorded at 114.7 decibels. At his own expense, former senator William Proxmire has published a new metaphysical treatise entitled *Your Joyride to Health*. The 78-year-old solon argues that the key to longevity and good health is keeping a smile on one's face ceaselessly, even under difficult circumstances. "Even when you feel terrible," the former presidential candidate asserts, "smile." "Break your record," Mr. Proxmire advises. "Make your smile continue for a full minute, then five minutes, then half an hour." Research and simple inquiry into human nature have brought the Senator to the conclusion that if an individual were to go through his day with a jolly smile on his face, even while walking the street, even while seated on the subway, he would be healthier and happier and much less of a drain on our health-care system; unless, of course, someone takes offense and beats the hell out of him.

• President Bill Clinton's mother passed away just days before he flew to Europe for meetings with NATO allies, with the heads of former Soviet satellites, and with President Boris Yeltsin. The United States Supreme Court ruled that Mr. Bernard McCummings—a mugger shot and left paralyzed after he beat and choked 72-year-old Mr. Jerome Sandusky in a subway station—could keep the $4.3 awarded him by a New York jury. Mr. Sandusky was not charged. In Fort Lauderdale, Florida, stalking charges were dropped against Mr. Robert Kahles, 27, after his ex-girlfriend, whom he had been accused of stalking, committed suicide. And on the condom front there are mixed messages. In Oologah, Oklahoma, Mr. Kelly Ford, an English teacher, has agreed to resign his post at a local school after he apparently spoiled a school party by giving a female student a rubber cap depicting a condom and a card of dubious taste. Yet in Paris a giant condom was lowered over the obelisk at the Place de la Concorde and no jobs were lost or feelings hurt.

• Three men in Adelaide, Australia, who employed a three-week-old sea lion pup as bait to catch a record-breaking 3,344-pound shark, were ordered to pay $21,000 in fines and court fees because, in the words of Magistrate Fred Field, "the act of taking such a young sea lion pup must have been a cause of distress to the pup and its mother." The whereabouts of the pup were not disclosed. In what appears to be a multicultural debacle, two young men in Stuart, Florida, have been severely punished for individual acts of violence against kittens. Eight-month jail sentences were meted out to Mr. Edward Lee Harrell, 19, for butchering an unnamed kitten after it evacuated on his rug and to Mr. Miqueas Perez, 21, who stomped and kicked and hurled another unnamed kitten into a tree. Mr. Perez explained that "I was drunk and the animal came across my path," but Stuart is not Washington, D.C., and Mr. Perez is neither a congressman nor a senator. So it is off to the hoosegow with him, as the Crisis picks up steam.

—RET

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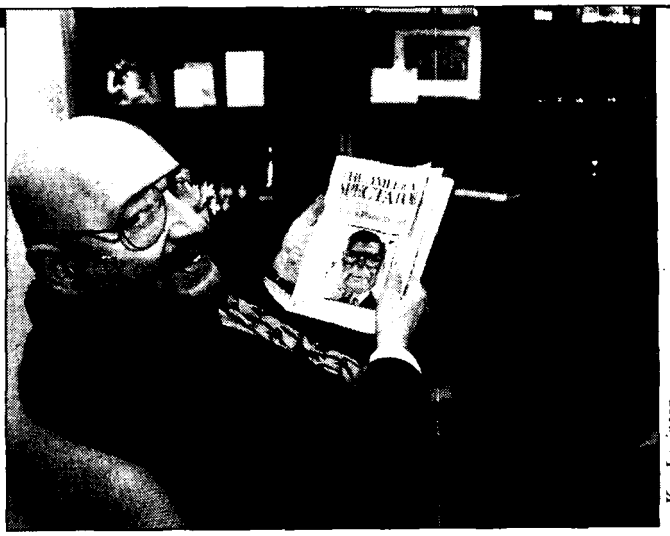

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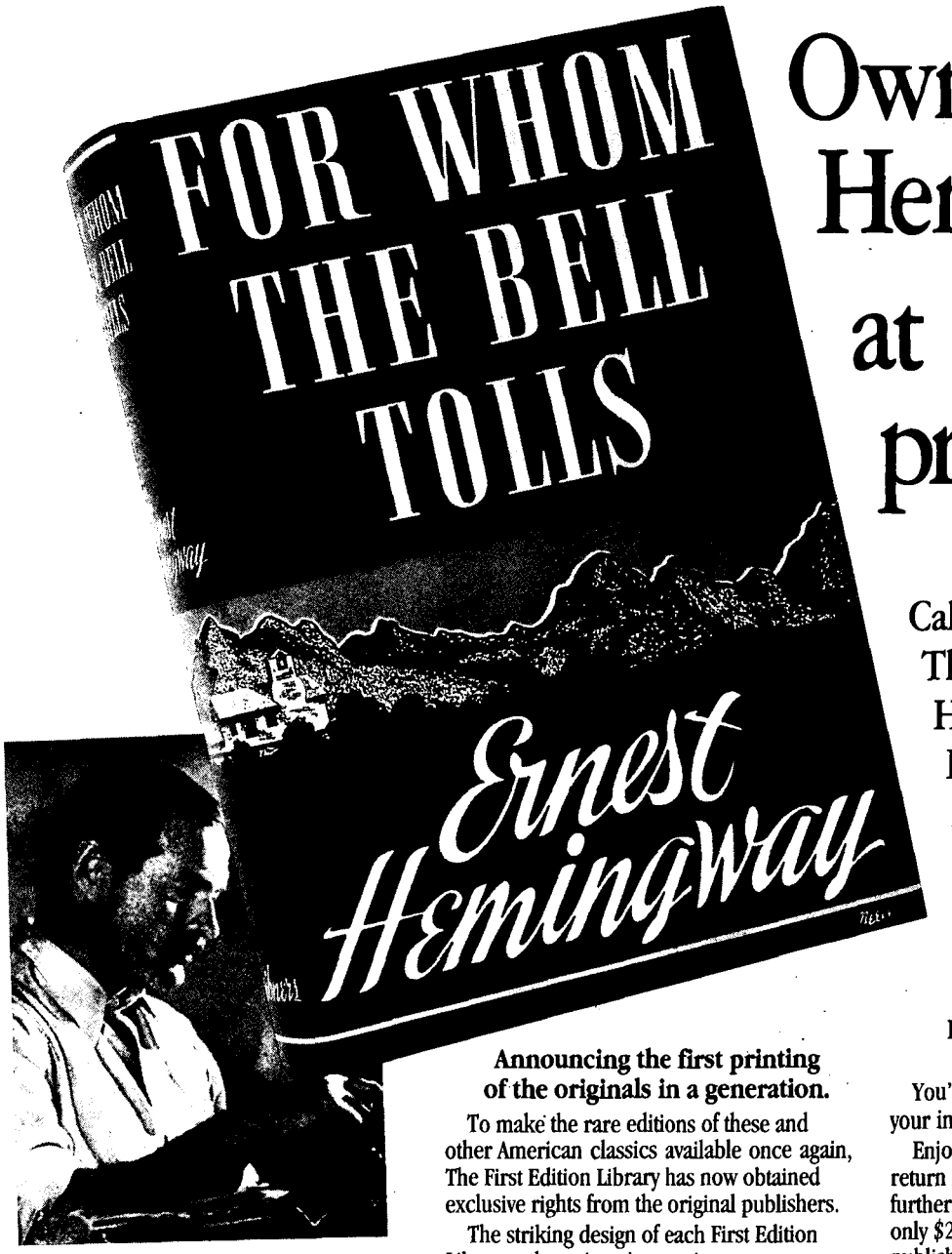

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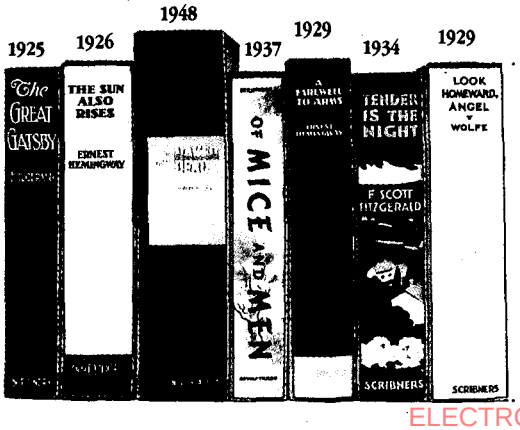

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Trooper Eruptions

David Brock's article ("Living With the Clintons," *TAS*, January 1994) did not live up to its hype: it proved to be just a bunch of shopworn second-hand allegations embellished by some rather unconvincing complaints from some resentful ex-bodyguards.

In any case, the question of whether or not Clinton did the things Brock said he did is ultimately irrelevant. Most of those who voted for Clinton (myself amongst them) did so after factoring in the possibility that the wild stories that surfaced early in the 1992 primary season might actually prove to be true.

Brock is presumably hoping that his story will start a chain of events which culminates in Bill Clinton's resignation from the presidency. This would be a tragedy, but ultimately it would change nothing: it would, for better or worse, merely replace Bill Clinton with someone politically very much like Bill Clinton, with similar ideas, similar priorities, and similar programs. . . .

—Timothy Horrigan
Hanover, New Hampshire

Your journalistic courage is commendable. The publication of "His Cheatin' Heart," by David Brock, is an example of responsible media coverage of an irresponsible and amoral Bill Clinton. He managed to get elected with the complicity of a duplicitous media. It is regrettable that many view your actions with disdain and accuse you of prejudicial partisanship.

With the election of Bill Clinton, our nation has been humiliated as never before. It is now time that we start the process of cleansing our soul from this stain on our national honor.

—Arnold P. Josevie
Larchmont, New York

Congratulations! Consider this your official eligibility notice for the ranks of tabloid journalism hell. Try to be in your office on January 29 when we announce the winner; there may be an ambulance in the neighborhood worthy of your chasing.

Your attempt to pass off the long Bill Clinton article as an inquiry into the abuses of government services during the Little Rock years is quite admirable, though in reality, quite laughable. By the end of page two, it's looking more like "how can we smear this guy?" Could your motives be any *more* transparent? Why would an otherwise reputable, respected magazine pick through the White House trash? Could it be that your circulation is dropping as quickly as this country recuperates from 12 years of (gasp!) Republican rule? Or is it merely a case of your good buddy Rush Limbaugh and his entourage ingesting too large a serving of sour grapes?

Who Bill Clinton sleeps with is Bill Clinton's business. . . .

—Barbara S. Goodwin
Brooklyn, New York

Mr. Brock's article demonstrates the abysmal level of moral turpitude of our president and his wife. Could it have been otherwise? Not really. If we consider the gusto with which the youthful Mr. Clinton deeply imbibed (but not inhaled) the pagan, bacchanalian culture of the late sixties, we should not be at all surprised that he now elevates it to moral principle, to which he is deeply committed. Witness the sexual morals being legislated by this administration. As you sow, so shall you reap. Yet, it is not only he who is culpable of moral turpitude. Also sharing in culpability are the two-fifths of the electorate who voted for him, along with his operatives (who may have also engaged in illegal activities), as well as the compliant media, which permitted itself to be cowed into a deafening silence regarding Mr. Clinton's moral character. Or perhaps the media's complicity was voluntary, inasmuch as its owners, editors, writers, and reporters share Mr. Clinton's values. In any case, even if only ten percent of the acts allegedly committed by Mr. Clinton, as described by Mr. Brock, pass basic evidentiary standards, this country is in deep trouble. . . .

—Moses Sabbagh
New York, New York

I don't believe I have ever in my entire life written or commented on any article of public writ. However, after reading the January issue of your publication, and the article titled "Living With The Clintons," I cannot sit still any longer.

I am an American, white male, 64 years old. I am on the side of conservative beliefs. I did not and will not ever vote for Bill Clinton. I believe and know to be true all that has been said about the Clintons. I am neither a prude, nor am I a fanatic. So, what am I writing about that would pry me from my lifestyle of not getting involved?

Well, Sir, it is just this, and I will make it short and sweet. The commentary on the Clintons could have been written in its completeness *without* all the suggested expletives, and the detailed immoral acts. I honestly had to look at the cover to see if I was reading the *Spectator* or one of the Hollywood "rags." That kind of journalism is not necessary to get a point across. I for one was ashamed to have this magazine in my house. It is pornographic, whether it shows up in *National Geographic*, or the Sunday funnies.

—Bernie Muscutt
Bellingham, Washington

Now that you and a few of your contributors have ensured the financial security of a couple of quick-buck Arkansas state troopers, may I make a suggestion? Change the name of your publication to "The American Voyeur."

That lawyer in Little Rock may not have achieved much distinction in legal circles, but he seems to have built a career out of simply hating Bill Clinton.

—Robert S. Shirey
Las Cruces, New Mexico

P.S. How's the view from the sewer?

First things first. Enclosed is my subscription renewal. . . . David Brock is rapidly becoming a national treasure. . . .

Question: If the Arkansas police officers who guarded the governor and president-elect were persons of unsavory character, why in the world did Bill Clinton utilize them as his personal guard?

—John Kirk
Pikeville, Kentucky

In this age of Enlightenment, I believe that it would be in the best interest of the Republic if you would send a complimentary copy of the January 1994 edition of *The American Spectator* to each and every member of Congress and the Senate, both Republican and Democrat. Send it to their homes so that their wives can read what a wonderful family man Bill Clinton is and

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the beautiful relationship he and Hillary had in Arkansas and now in Washington.

—Paul D. Schurgot, Jr.
Dallas, Texas

As an American I am deeply disturbed by your reckless disregard for our country in continuing to attack The President of the United States.

To me an American that really loves his country, this is TREASON, not good journalism. . . . Surely you must realize that to demean and berate a sitting president is an attack upon the American people and weakens his credibility in dealing with foreign challenges, both military and economically.

The Clintons' lives may be fair game during a campaign for office, but once a man is elected by the American people as President . . . one cannot help but part company with mean, angry, small-minded people. We don't have to like Mr. Clinton—but he's the president! . . . I will have to seek real authentic, intelligent conservative views elsewhere. *—Dr. Earl Parchia*
Florida State Council
Pentecostal Assemblies of the World
Killarney, Florida

No husband can hold himself up as a leader to his children, whatever his failings in business or public life, if he cannot honor his oath to his wife. If a man fails to keep his word to his family, he is wrong. A public man who dishonors his wife by infidelity, who then lies about his conduct, is not only wrong, but he also cannot be trusted. He cannot secure the trust of the people because he dishonors the basic governing unit of civilization, the family. If he uses the agents of government to abet his wrongful acts he seals the mistrust of the people. First, we cannot trust Mr. Clinton when he neither recognizes nor admits his wrong to his family—even if his family redeems him. Second, we cannot trust him because he has abused his privilege as a public leader of the people. Mr. Clinton is doubly wrong, for breaking his word to his family and for breaking his trust with the people.

—Bob Ernst
Monterey, California

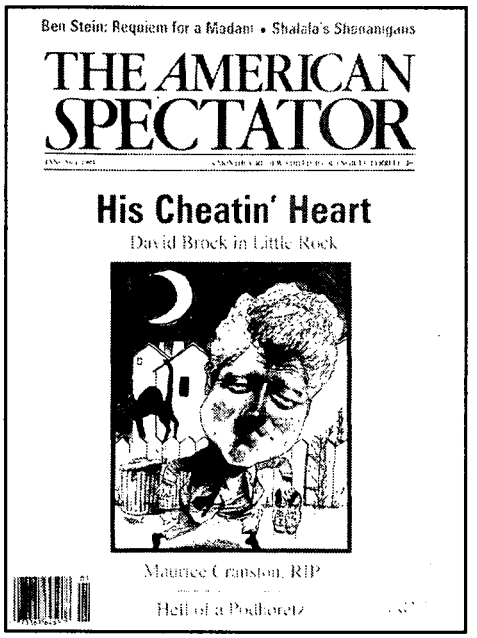
Congratulations! David Brock's unconfirmed-rumor "exposé" of the Clintons is an absolutely brilliant spoof of Kitty Kelley. (It is a spoof, isn't it?)

—Bruce Moomaw
Cameron Park, California

If only a modicum of Mr. Brock's article on Bill Clinton's sexcapades is true, we have two veritable sociopaths living in the White House. I am having a very difficult time believing the plethora of nauseating anecdotes recorded in Mr. Brock's piece. Yes, I do believe Clinton is severely lacking in the morals department and I believe Perry and Patterson's accusations. But, I also believe they may have embellished a bit.

Most importantly, I am shocked that *TAS* decided to print Mr. Brock's article. The story was told with the graphic details and sensationalism of a tabloid publication. *TAS* could have printed an earnest article researching the troopers' charges and Whitewatergate. . . .

—Maggie O'Connor
Portland, Oregon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THE AMERICAN SPECTATOR
His Cheatin' Heart
David Brock in Little Rock
Maurice Cranston, RIP
Hell of a Prothorax

There are no adequate words to express our abhorrence to your recent article attempting to debase our president.

It is only too obvious Mr. Brock is willing to prostitute himself for a brief moment of recognition and probable personal gain. The article should have been entitled "The Attempted Assassination of a Presidency."

It should be apparent to anyone that Mr. Brock and the rest of his ilk, in their never-ending efforts to bring down this president, are also bringing down this nation and for this they have gone beyond contemptible. . . .

We believe this president has a chance for greatness if he would be but given the opportunity. *—Harry and Verda Burns*
Mitchell, South Dakota

I must congratulate your magazine for having the integrity and the courage to allow David Brock to pursue and publish the story about the Clintons. As no one in the Clinton administration has denied the story, it is almost certain that the facts are absolutely true. I would urge you to continue to pursue additional abuses of power and the lack of integrity possessed by these people and members of their administration.

After all the facts are substantiated, I would hope that your magazine would lead the way in demanding Clinton's resignation. At this time in history, the citizenry of this country need a leader whose integrity and actions demand trust and inspire confidence. This is obviously not the case with this man nor his wife. They are both so obsessed with achieving political power that they will pursue any course or endure any personal hardships to achieve it. The Clintons are obviously not of the people, nor for the people, nor by the people, and they must be forced to resign for the good of the country. . . .

—Daniel F. Ryan
Whitestone, New York

I hope you're prepared to be hoisted on your own petard. I'm talking about those who might be clever enough to use David Brock's Anita Hill book to discredit the Arkansas troopers. The parallels between Hill's and Clinton's accusers are too delicious to ignore. I'm sure I'm not the only one who's noticed, and I'm one of Brock's biggest fans.

In 1991 Anita Hill was a disgruntled ex-employee of the man she accused of sexually harassing her. She believed she had been slighted—personally and professionally— by Clarence Thomas. She waited ten years (not just one) to make her vengeful accusations. The timing of her accusations was exquisitely designed to torpedo a Supreme Court nomination (not just a First Family's Christmas). Her only corroborating witness has been discredited, no small thanks to Brock. The Arkansas troopers apparently have no corroborating witnesses. Hill got her legal counsel from Thomas's political enemies. The troopers have Cliff Jackson. At the time of her accusations, she said she was not out for personal gain. She's now a feminist hero, earns five-figure speaking fees, and has a book in the works. The troopers have at least hinted they would like to get a book deal out of this. Then, it

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was her word against his. Now, it's the troopers' word against the Clintons'.

After being persuaded by Brock's book that Hill was lying, why should I believe the troopers are not? —*Ken Bashford*
Springfield, Virginia

That you have such a morally misguided, self-seeking *enfant terrible* on your staff revolts me—not only because what he wrote is crass and banal, but also because obviously you do not perceive the disgusting element in this puerile effort at journalism. (May I remind you that the sins of the flesh are nothing when compared to the sins of the spirit.) That you publish and promote the trashy tales he wrote about our president indicates to me both the depths of degradation to which some of the media has plummeted. . . .

Even if *every word* reported about then-Governor Clinton were totally true (and I am not at all sure of that), for you to exploit, as you have, this sensational story at a time when our country needs our president to accomplish herculean tasks against mammoth forces in health-care reform, crime control, and rapidly unfolding international affairs is nothing short of treasonous. . . . —*Carmela G. Chirico*
Brooklyn, New York

"The Bill Clinton Story" is obviously a Hollywood remake of "Elmer Gantry," updated to encompass contemporary religious styles.

Here is Preacher Bill, stumpin' the countryside for the new faith: *Government as man's social salvation.* The yokels love it, cheering loudly as he works the crowds, and figuring it's all in a good cause as he empties their pockets. After all, what is more important than that we reject the evil worldly temptations of supply-side and be made whole by spiritually pure socialized health care?

The ever-loyal Sister Sharon fronts for the Messenger of the Lord and brings a tone of rectitude to the cause they share. Meanwhile, behind the tent our man of appetites can't keep his hands off the infatuated females who flock in his wake, drawn like moths to the flame of celebrity. Ah, those choir girls! Ah, those Sermons! There isn't a dry pair of drawers in the house.
—*George Schiele*
Greenwich, Connecticut

I refuse to use the word American with your name, for I really feel you are *anti-American*, and *anti-Christian*, to put out such a story at Christmas time about the President of our United States.

The story is an old one, unfounded—and all in the name of *greed*—not something associated with the Christmas spirit.

Someday, when you and that writer are older, you will rue the day that you came out with such hatred and mean-spiritedness—on the week in which we usually are kind to one another.
—*Ruth St. John*
of Virginia

Our library will not even consider purchasing a subscription to your publication while President Clinton is in office. I don't think your writers have any desire to be objective about him; they do not want to see anything positive about his presidency. Further, as long as David Brock is so important to you, we will not subscribe.

We try to have a balanced collection in our library. We have books, periodicals, etc. that reflect a wide array of viewpoints; but we try not to purchase anything that viciously (and with blinders on) attempts to drive public opinion down a narrow path.
—*Freda Burks, Ph.D.*
Librarian, Trinity High School
Euless, Texas

As I consider *The American Spectator* the most hate-filled, poisonous, vile/vicious, scurrilous, irrational publication I have ever read, I do not want it in my house and I am accordingly asking you to please remove my name from your mailing list and cancel my subscription.
—*Raymond Brown*
Vienna, Virginia
(Editor's note: the above letter was hand-delivered by Mr. Brown to the home of his neighbor TAS *publisher Ronald E. Burr.)*

David Brock is the most courageous investigative journalist in the country today. The American public owes him and *TAS* a debt of gratitude for pursuing and publishing such a controversial story. If this were a Republican administration, at least five special prosecutors would have been appointed by now to investigate the various scandals. There would be investigations in Congress and calls for impeachment by the media because of abuses of power and possible criminal actions by the president in the cover-up attempts. That the reaction of some of the media establishment has been to launch into desperate, specious, pathetic apologias for Slick Willie and his brat pack thugs illustrates why the mainstream media has lost credibility with millions of Americans. . . . —*Linda Warren*
Arlington, Virginia

May I add my congratulations to you and your staff for having the courage and integrity to seek out the truth and print it.

Today's *Los Angeles Times* includes an edited version of the truth (still protecting Hillary). *The American Spectator* is now as important for the story as was the *Washington Post* for exposing Watergate.
—*Richard Swan*
Oxnard, California

I always believed a conservative publication would know better than to report servants' gossip. —*Matthew Horan*
Fort Smith, Arkansas

'Twas the night before Christmas and all thru my house, the liberals were giggling while I could just pout. I had enthusiastically renewed my *TAS* subscription several weeks before and had received the *Spectator* anthology, *Orthodoxy*, in conjunction. It is the best collection of conservative writings I've read. Then this monumental story on the first couple blanketed the news and I attacked my mailbox every day awaiting my new *Spectator.*

Well, it arrived the Monday after Christmas after my liberal house guests had left and it is the best yet. It occurs to me that your fine magazine has endowed our nation with a special holiday gift, the disappearance of Bill and Hillary. I had glumly anticipated their gloating interviews and Katie Couric's adorable tour of our White House led by the first cuckold herself. Even *Time* magazine's Woman of the Year cover loomed ominously. Many thanks to Bob Tyrrell, David Brock, and the many superb people at *The American Spectator.* And to all a good night.
—*Timothy P. O'Neill*
Marco Island, Florida

Kindly cancel the balance of my subscription. You might send it to your favorite *whore house*, where I'm sure they will appreciate it better than I. Frankly I'm not interested in who blows who. If I was, I'm sure that I could find a dirtier rag than *The American Spectator.*
—*Marvin B. Hoffman*
Newington, Connecticut

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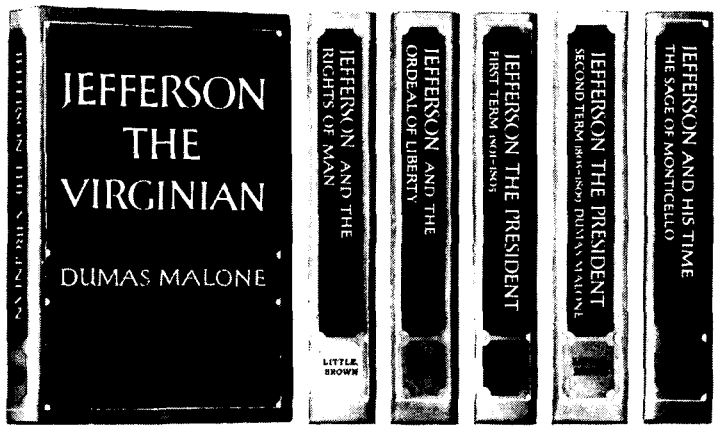

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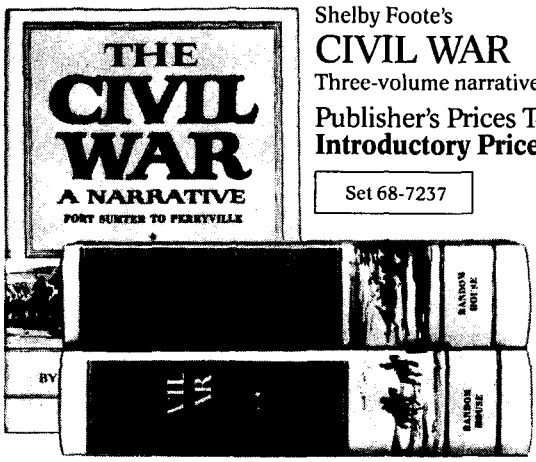

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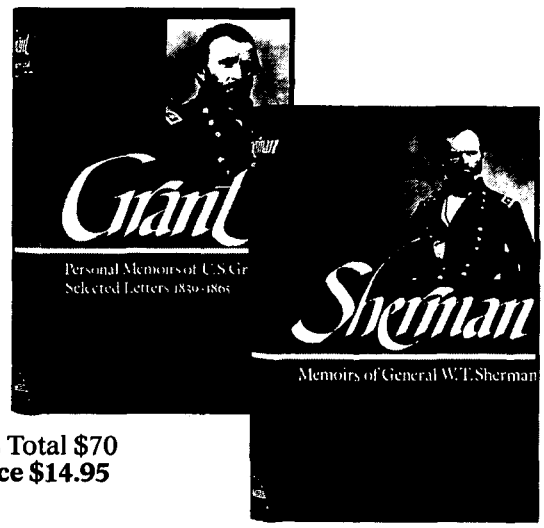

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CRIMINAL LAWS IMPLICATED BY THE CLINTON SCANDALS: A PARTIAL LIST

by Solitary, Poor, Nasty, Brutish & Short

As details concerning overlapping scandals involving President and Mrs. Clinton have emerged, the Clintons and their public relations lieutenants have been adamant that, whatever happened, there have been no allegations that any laws were broken.

Maybe not. But in the spirit of helping to inform the White House—and the Special Prosecutor—we offer the following list of potentially relevant criminal statutes, based on allegations that have appeared in the national press. We expect that special counsel Robert Fiske is preparing a similar list.

In compiling the list, we have not indulged in some of the wilder legal theories available—thus, for example, we do not assert that the Clintons might be prosecutable for running a criminal enterprise in violation of RICO; nor do we include a charge, of the type beloved by Iran-contra prosecutor Lawrence Walsh, that the Clintons conspired to violate unenacted congressional policies. And, of course, because all the facts are not yet available, many statutes that may become relevant in the days ahead won't appear here. Even so, the most recent crop of Clinton scandals already suggests a fairly impressive catalogue of possible-crimes:

Bill Clinton

Alleged misconduct	Statutes implicated	Penalty
1. While president, discussed possible federal jobs for Arkansas state troopers who had knowledge about potentially politically damaging stories of Clinton's marital infidelity and abuse of Arkansas Governor's office.	• 18 U.S.C. 201, which makes it a crime to offer or promise "directly or indirectly" anything of value to someone with the aim of influencing that person's testimony under oath.	Up to 15 years in prison, a fine, and disqualification from any federal office of honor, trust, or profit.
	• 18 U.S.C. 1622, prohibiting subornation of perjury.	Up to 5 years in prison, $2,000 fine.
2. While president, approved actions by White House Counsel Bernard Nussbaum designed to circumscribe official federal investigations into White House aide Vincent Foster's death, and directed that documents found in Foster's office be removed from the White House and handed over to a private lawyer retained by the Clintons.	• 18 U.S.C. 372, which prohibits conspiring to prevent any person—here, the FBI and Park Service investigators—from discharging the duties of federal office.	Up to 6 years in prison, $5,000 fine.
	• 18 U.S.C. 1001, which makes it a crime to conceal material facts in connection with matters within the jurisdiction of a United States agency.	Up to 5 years in prison, $10,000 fine.
	• 18 U.S.C. 1503 and 1505, which prohibit obstruction of justice and obstruction of Justice Department or Congressional inquiries.	Up to 10 years in prison, $10,000 fine.
3. While president, had Vincent Foster perform personal legal work at taxpayer expense.	• Any of a number of statutes governing employees of the White House and misuse of appropriations, but in particular 31 U.S.C. 1519, prohibiting the creation of financial obligations unauthorized by appropriations.	Up to 2 years in prison, $5,000 fine.

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4. While governor, used state troopers for personal errands, to facilitate extramarital affairs, and to investigate campaign opponents.	• 18 U.S.C. 666, which prohibits any state government employee from stealing or converting state property valued at over $5,000. (Theft of employee time has been held to be a theft prohibited under Section 666.)	Up to 10 years in prison and a fine of twice the amount of the pecuniary gain.
5. While governor, named John Latham, chief executive officer for Madison Guaranty, to a seat on the state S&L regulatory board. Also named Beverly Bassett, who had previously served as lawyer for Madison, commissioner of the Arkansas Securities Commission. Bassett would later give Madison regulatory approval on several of its requests. McDougal would later host a fundraiser that would allegedly funnel Madison funds to Clinton.	• Section 5-52-101 of the Arkansas Criminal Code, which makes it a crime to trade in public offices. • Section 5-52-103 of the Arkansas Criminal Code, which makes it a crime for a public servant to solicit a bribe.	Up to 1 year in prison, $1,000 fine. Up to 6 years in prison, $10,000 fine.
6. While governor, extracted an illegal Small Business Administration loan from David Hale's investment company which went to James McDougal's wife. The McDougals were partners with the Clintons in Whitewater Development Co. Mrs. McDougal thereafter gave a portion of her loan to Whitewater Development Co. The loan was never repaid.	• 15 U.S.C. 645, which prohibits making false statements for the purpose of obtaining any loan from the Small Business Administration. • 18 U.S.C. 371, making it a crime to conspire to defraud the federal government. • 18 U.S.C. 1006, which makes it a crime to share "directly or indirectly" in any payment made in violation of federal laws governing small business investment companies. • 18 U.S.C. 1344, criminalizing frauds on financial institutions. • Section 5-42-204 of the Arkansas Criminal Code, which makes it a crime to launder the proceeds of criminal activity.	Up to 2 years in prison, $5,000 fine. Up to 5 years in prison, $10,000 fine. Up to 30 years in prison, $1,000,000 fine. Up to 30 years in prison, $1,000,000 fine. Up to 10 years in prison, $10,000 fine.
7. While Arkansas attorney general, shortly before becoming governor, received a 50-percent interest in Whitewater from the McDougals in return for an apparently nominal investment.	• Section 5-52-103 of the Arkansas Criminal Code, which makes it a crime for a public servant to accept a bribe.	Up to 6 years in prison, $10,000 fine.
8. While governor, pressured McDougal to retain Hillary Clinton to represent his S&L in order to help the Clintons financially.	• Section 5-52-103 of the Arkansas Criminal Code, which makes it a crime for a public servant to solicit a bribe.	Up to 6 years in prison, $10,000 fine.
9. While governor, advised Gennifer Flowers, in taped conversation, to state falsely that they had never talked about her obtaining a state job. ("If they ever ask you if you've talked to me about it, you can say no.")	• 18 U.S.C. 1512, criminalizing attempts to influence testimony. • Section 5-53-110 of the Arkansas Criminal Code, which prohibits tampering with witnesses.	Up to 10 years in prison, $250,000 fine. Up to 1 year in prison, $1,000 fine.

(continued on next page)

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10. While governor, participated in the destruction of Whitewater files. The McDougals, partners with the Clintons in Whitewater, have stated that they delivered Whitewater's records to the Arkansas Governor's mansion at the request of Mrs. Clinton. Both Clintons deny receiving the documents, some of which are missing.	• 26 U.S.C. 7206, which makes it a crime to destroy any record relating to the "financial condition of the taxpayer." • Section 5-37-202 of the Arkansas Criminal Code, which prohibits the destruction of business records with the intent to defraud.	Up to 3 years in prison, $100,000 fine. Up to 1 year in prison, $1,000 fine.
11. While governor, benefited from numerous errors in tax filings having to do with illegal deductions, treatment of capital gains, unreported income, etc.	• 26 U.S.C. 7206, which makes it a crime to file a tax return that the filers do not believe to be true and correct as to every material matter.	Up to 3 years in prison, $100,000 fine.
12. While president, engaged in cover-up activities with respect to all of the above, involving, among other things, the making of false statements about his role in and knowledge of the various scandals, and conspiring with others to have them make similar false statements.	• 18 U.S.C. 372, which prohibits conspiring to prevent any person (such as Justice Department investigators) from discharging the duties of federal office. • 18 U.S.C. 1001, prohibiting concealment and false or misleading statements in connection with any matter within the jurisdiction of the Justice Department.	Up to 6 years in prison, $5,000 fine. Up to 5 years in prison, $10,000 fine.
Total potential criminal liability: disqualification from federal office, 178 years in prison, more than $2.5 million in fines.		

Hillary Rodham Clinton

Alleged misconduct	Statutes implicated	Penalty
1. In 1985, as counsel for Madison, submitted audit to state regulators to demonstrate that Madison was solvent; four years later, after Madison's collapse, her law partner, Webster Hubbell, attacked the bona fides of the audit in litigation in which he represented the FDIC, calling into question what Mrs. Clinton knew and when she knew it.	• 18 U.S.C. 1014, prohibiting false statements designed to influence "in any way" the actions of federal financial regulators. • Section 23-34-108 of the Arkansas Code, which prohibits intentionally false statements regarding banks. • Section 5-37-202 of the Arkansas Criminal Code, prohibiting the fraudulent creation of false business records.	Up to 30 years in prison, $1,000,000 fine. Up to 10 years in prison. Up to 1 year in prison, $1,000 fine.
2. Participated with her husband in the destruction of Whitewater files.	• 26 U.S.C. 7206, which makes it a crime to destroy any record relating to the "financial condition of the taxpayer."	Up to 3 years in prison, $100,000 fine.
3. Benefited with her husband from numerous errors in tax filings.	• 26 U.S.C. 7206, which makes it a crime to file a tax return that the filers do not believe to be true and correct as to every material matter.	Up to 3 years in prison, $100,000 fine.
Total potential criminal liability: 47 years in prison, more than $1.2 million in fines.		

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Bernard Nussbaum, White House Counsel

Alleged misconduct	Statutes implicated	Penalty
1. With Clinton political aides, circumscribed FBI and Park Police investigations into Vincent Foster's suicide, and gave Foster files to Bill Clinton's personal lawyer.	• 18 U.S.C. 372, which prohibits conspiring to prevent any person from discharging the duties of federal office.	Up to 6 years in prison, $5,000 fine.
	• 18 U.S.C. 1001, which makes it a crime to conceal material facts in connection with any matter within the jurisdiction of a United States agency.	Up to 5 years in prison, $10,000 fine.
	• 18 U.S.C. 1503 and 1505, which prohibit obstruction of justice and obstruction of Justice Department or Congressional inquiries.	Up to 10 years in prison, $10,000 fine.
Total potential criminal liability: 21 years in prison, $25,000 in fines.		

Webster Hubbell, Associate Attorney General

Alleged misconduct	Statutes implicated	Penalty
1. As partner of Hillary Clinton in the Rose Law Firm, represented the FDIC in suit against Madison, without bothering to disclose to the FDIC that Mr. Hubbell's firm had previously represented Madison, or that Mrs. Clinton was a partner of McDougal.	• 18 U.S.C. 208, which prohibits special government employees from acting in matters in which they or their partners have a financial interest.	Up to 5 years in prison and a fine.
	• 18 U.S.C. 1001, which makes it a crime to conceal material facts in connection with matters within the jurisdiction of a United States agency.	Up to 5 years in prison, $10,000 fine.
	• 18 U.S.C. 1007, which prohibits influencing "in any way" the actions of the FDIC by means of false statements.	Up to 30 years in prison, $1,000,000 fine.
Total potential criminal liability: 40 years in prison, more than $1 million in fines.		

Betsey Wright, Former Clinton Aide, Current Associate

Alleged misconduct	Statutes implicated	Penalty
1. Visited Arkansas state trooper Danny Ferguson in an effort to get him to change his story that Bill Clinton offered troopers federal jobs to discourage them from speaking about his actions.	• 18 U.S.C. 1512, criminalizing attempts to influence testimony.	Up to 10 years in prison, $250,000 fine.
	• 18 U.S.C. 1622, prohibiting subornation of perjury.	Up to 5 years in prison, $2,000 fine.
	• Section 5-53-110 of the Arkansas Criminal Code, which prohibits tampering with witnesses.	Up to 1 year in prison, $1,000 fine.
2. Failed to file election contribution reports identifying individual contributors to Clinton's 1984 gubernatorial campaign, thus hiding identity of possibly phantom contributors through whom McDougal funneled Madison funds to Clinton prior to Madison's collapse.	• Section 7-6-205 of the Arkansas Code, which prohibits use of false names to make political contributions.	Up to 1 year in prison, $1,000 fine.
	• Section 7-6-207 of the Arkansas Code, requiring the filing of lists of political contributors.	Up to 1 year in prison, $1,000 fine.
Total potential criminal liability: 18 years in prison, more than $250,000 in fines.		

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The Worst Book of the Year

by R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr.

It is that joyous time of year when I and my colleagues on the J. Gordon Coogler Committee confer the Coogler laurels upon the author of that degenerate literary work that we adjudge the Worst Book of the Year. Generally the award is conferred a couple of months into the new year, for in this era of widespread higher education a stupendous number of very bad books are published. Reading them all takes a vast amount of time. In fact, reading merely one or two can be time-consuming. Some are sleep-inducing (particularly those written by the so-called professoriate) and others can leave the reader nauseated (I have in mind the dreadful stuff written by that ghastly lit set babied and cosseted at one of the Republic's idiotic writers workshops; think of Robert Coover, author of *The Public Burning* and Coogler laureate for 1977).

This year our job was easy. Another feminist law school prof has heaved up a semi-literate tract, and all the judges rushed to it. Years of reading bad books suggested that she would turn out true drivel, drivel beyond anything any other university professor might exhale. Surely her scholarly efforts would be a mess upon the page.

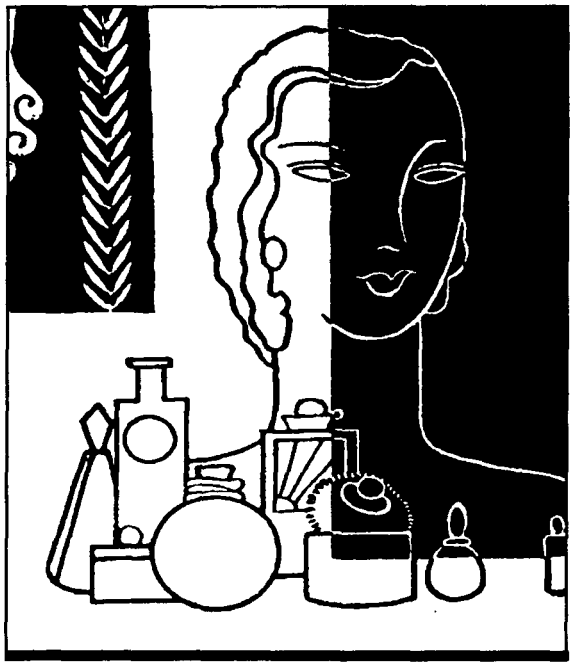
We have not been disappointed. Professor Catharine MacKinnon, the screaming jewel of the University of Michigan Law School, has won the 1993 Coogler Award for the Worst Book of the Year. Her book is *Only Words*, another feminist sally into misandry. Now there is a word we in the age of feminist rant rarely see. It means the hatred of men.

Only Words's argumentation is specious and sophomoric. Its data are dubious when not arrantly bogus. Its prose is what we have come to expect from the modern law school. And its theses are nonsensical and often mischievous to the Bill of Rights, the rule of law, and a happy sex life. This is such a dreadful book that I shall not be surprised if it also wins a Pulitzer Prize and the National Book Award.

La MacKinnon believes that words are deeds. Bad words are the same as bad deeds. Ipso facto, bad words should be treated as bad deeds, which is to say punishable by law. The First Amendment shall be abbreviated.

But a word is not a deed. To enter into debate with such a fraud is to enter into her fantasyland. If a bad word is a bad deed, then a good word is a good deed, so the honored axiom that "actions speak louder than words" is extinct. No longer do we need to help an old lady across the street. Now it is sufficient to sit by the curb uttering pious thoughts as the poor lady inches her way through the traffic.

Professor MacKinnon is very much opposed to rape, which she believes makes her unique. She is also opposed to pornography, another position she assumes to be controversial. Yet she comes from the same philosophical tradition that has allowed pornography to become such a widespread nuisance, and inasmuch as pornography might encourage rape she comes from the philosophical tradition that allowed the increased incidence of rape. The tradition teaches that words have no general meaning. Thus, thirty-five years ago, when the barriers against pornography withered, sophists very much like MacKinnon were arguing that the word "obscenity" had no common meaning, that what was pornography for thee was literature for me, that some dirty-necked sexual deviant scribbling about excrement played the same role as Shakespeare writing *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. In fact, it is *la* MacKinnon's philosophical tradi-



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tion that lectures us against the existence of sexual deviants.

One of the problems with denying the general meaning of words is that bullies can then dominate discourse. They will tell us what are good and usable words and what are the words that will land us in court. MacKinnon is, aside from being a faulty thinker and preposterous writer, a bully. She would eagerly have writers jailed for writing what she says is pornography. That is clear from her stupid book. As for what she might adjudge pornography, it might be anything. She has already accused the man who reviewed her book unfavorably in the *Nation* of raping her by his review. She and her boyfriend have publicly threatened the reviewer, the boyfriend writing, "If there is ever anything I can do to hurt your career, I will do it." Let us hope *la* MacKinnon accepts her Coogler award for the Worst Book of the Year as a compliment. I do not want my career cut short. ❐

David and the Goliaths

It is an amazing spectacle! One of the most liberating writers in American journalism continues to be vilified, mainly by journalists, for writing bold and accurate journalism. Admittedly his vilifiers are the bought journalists of the social-climbing variety, whose party-line prose has made American journalism dubious to millions of Americans. Yet they continue to tut-tut at David Brock and to utter dark threats. Brock is the journalist who revealed Anita Hill's testimony for the salad of falsehoods and contradictions that it is. He is now the journalist who broke the story of the Clintons' repeated abuse of power, their continued lies to the electorate and to the press, their dissimulations regarding the suicide of the highest-level federal official since James Forrestal, and Bill Clinton's satyriasis. Brock's report is about the same story that two fine reporters at the *Los Angeles Times* finally published two days after Brock and CNN broke it. Nonetheless the bought journalists target Brock.

They are wasting their spitballs. What makes Brock a marvel among journalists is that he does not care what others think, and he does not have to. Rather than work in one of the gigantic bureaucracies of our media where advancement comes with flattering some highly politicized and otherwise craven editor, Brock writes for small, independent journals. He is free to do what investigative journalists are supposed to do, namely, establish the truth of a news story by corroboration and verification of the evidence at hand. Later, when more evidence is available, historians can affirm journalists' accuracy, as they surely will with Brock's work on Hill and the Clintons.

Why are the vilifiers of David Brock not hissing at CNN and the *Los Angeles Times*? I suppose they think that by reviling Brock they will scare all other American journalists away from their patrons. They are going to fail. The Clintons are singularly corrupt. As the multiplying headlines about Whitewatergate and the Madison bank bust make clear, increasing numbers of inquisitive journalists are unearthing vast financial and political corruption in their wake. After Brock's boldness it is going to be ever more difficult for editors and publishers to muzzle diligent reporters.

As for Brock's writing, it is alive with vivid detail and careful analysis that leaves his detractors looking like naïfs or simple propagandists. TV commentator Paul Duke calls David Brock one of the year's "losers," who "wrote that slimy magazine article that revived all those old charges about Bill Clinton's personal behavior." *New York Times* columnist Frank Rich says of the troopers' testimony regarding Clinton's serial sex, "If true, [the charges] would make the president seem all too pathetically ordinary." *Newsweek* columnist Joe Klein says, "The story is trash," and innocently asks, "Where are all the women?" You know how many women eagerly step forward and admit to adultery. You know how "ordinary" it is to maintain half a dozen sexual partners and to arrange yet more one-night stands. And are the charges of Clinton's security detail "old stories"? Does Paul Duke know something about these troopers that other Americans do not, or has the TV commentator again failed to read that which he jabbers about?

Actually Brock's 11,000-word piece is argued on a very high intellectual plane. It is based on troopers' testimony that has yet to be refuted by the Clintons (who have carefully avoided denying the charges) or by other troopers—one of whom bowed to Clinton adviser Betsey Wright's importunities to depose but not sign an affidavit denying a charge that Brock never raised. Brock never said President Clinton offered this trooper a job "for silence" as the affidavit states, but rather for information on the other troopers. Brock's charge remains unrefuted.

Brock's piece begins by describing past presidents' sexual misbehavior and the attendant political coercion that always follows such promiscuity, making it a serious threat to the commonweal. Next he introduces the troopers, acknowledges their possible motives—noble and ignoble—and details their responsibilities and access to the Clintons even after the election. His next section profiles Clinton: a quick study, hard-working, once-radical, now eager to please—all very interesting and not entirely unflattering.

Next Brock discusses the new morality that, fairly or unfairly, sank other public figures, e.g., John Tower, Robert Packwood, and Gary Hart. Brock demonstrates how Clinton has manipulated the media, for instance, his deceits on "Sixty Minutes." He then describes abuses of power, and the heavy-handed threats of Clinton henchman Buddy Young, the troopers' former boss, who claimed to Brock not to be in contact with the White House and then was filmed by ABC conferring with White House aide Bruce Lindsey. Only then do we get into steamy testimony regarding the sex lives of the Clintons, and charges of Hillary Clinton ordering the destruction of records. It is a charge that echoes through the Whitewatergate reports.

Does this sound like "tabloid fare" to you? Actually, it is probably the most devastating revelation of a sitting president's past corruptions ever published. Journalists and citizens concerned by the corruption of American life can thank David Brock for its liberating effect. My fellow journalists, continue your work. The bought journalists may soon be out of work. ❐

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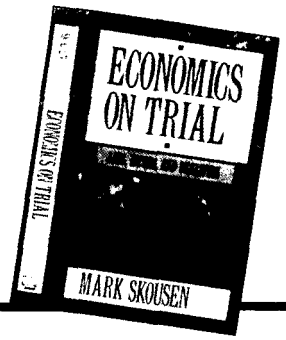
THE BOOK CAMPUS LIBERALS FEAR THE MOST



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— Prof. Paul Samuelson, MIT

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The Air-Conditioned Nightmare

by Tom Bethell

Scientific ideas have been shaped by culturally dominant ideas in the past, and in that sense science has always been partly "political." Today, however, for the first time in democracies, we are seeing a policy-driven activity that superficially resembles science but scorns its underlying methods. The environmentalists have been principally responsible for this—although more recently AIDS research has been similarly debased. But the environmentalists are the main interest group to have figured out that science can be hijacked for ideological purposes. Seemingly scientific public statements can frighten politicians into changing laws, and government agencies that will profit from the scare have increasingly collaborated.

The Soviet Union may seem an obvious precedent, but the analogy, while enticing, is misleading. For a couple of decades, biology was admittedly politicized. The Communists hoped to create New Soviet Man, and agronomists such as Trofim Lysenko obligingly claimed to have bred New Soviet Wheat (which could grow in the tundra). But with Stalin as the all-powerful tyrant, Soviet scientists rationally kowtowed to him. There was no pretense of a free press, which was purposefully (and logically) suppressed.

The situation in the U.S. is quite different. There is no coercive tyranny, merely a tyranny of opinion. If anything, the flow of authority has been reversed. Our modern-day Lysenkos more nearly tell our hapless politicians what to say and think. When George Bush became president he was from the outset eager to do the enviros' bidding. And no Lubyanka Prison is needed to whip our supine press corps into line. The *New York Times* and *Newsweek*, Peter Jennings and Dan Rather know that digging beneath the surface is not expected where the environment is concerned. The "lesson of Watergate" may have been "Do not accept government statements uncritically," but that's all water under the bridge. On the environmental and medical beats today, journalists are under the thumbs of government and private pressure groups and mechanically transmit their press releases.

One of the best examples of the hijacking of science has been the alarmism about a chemical threat to the ozone layer. In 1974, F. Sherwood Rowland, a political chemist from the University of California–Irvine, propounded the theory that chlorofluorocarbons (a DuPont trade name)—chemicals used in refrigeration and air conditioning—make their way into the stratosphere, where they supposedly gobble up ozone. It's suggestive that the ozone scare began decades ago, long before anyone was worrying about CFCs. In the 1960s, for example, ozone worries (having nothing to do with CFCs) helped block development of the supersonic transport plane. Other ozone-threatening candidates have included atomic testing and chemical fertilizers.

Ozone (an oxygen compound) is valuable because it intercepts ultraviolet rays. If we are exposed to excessive doses of ultraviolet, there is an increased danger of skin cancer. In a nutshell, that is the scare. The idea, then, is that ozone is a valuable natural shield, which human beings endanger with their foolhardy and reckless tinkering with nature. Did the noble Native Americans have air-conditioned wigwams? Come now! Let us return to simpler ways . . . Simpler and safer! Exhibit A in the environmentalists' case has been the so-called ozone hole above the Antarctic, which is not a hole but a thinning.

The great problem with Rowland's theory is that its truth has been demonstrated only in computer models, not in reality. The complex chemical reactions that he describes work out on paper but have not been shown to occur in the stratosphere. It has never actually been demonstrated as a fact that CFCs significantly impair the ozone layer. Furthermore, no *global* (as opposed to Antarctic) depletion of the ozone has yet been demonstrated. According to Fred Singer, director of the Washington-based Science and Environmental Project, such reductions as have been measured are well within the normal (and wide) ozone fluctuations. Not enough time has elapsed to show an abnormal trend. Hoover Institution Wesson fellow Sally Baliunis makes the same point.

In addition, there has been no demonstrated increase in ultraviolet rays striking the Earth, as the *Washington Post* has conceded. So the theory fails on both counts. Neither ozone loss nor ultraviolet increase has been demonstrated. Last April 15, Boyce Rensberger, the *Post*'s chief science writer, concluded a lengthy, mostly reasonable review of the topic with the following escape clause: "So well are the corrective measures proceeding that scientists who have been looking for effects of ozone depletion say it may not be possible to document any before the massive injection of CFCs into the atmosphere fades away." He might have said: "CFC depletion of the ozone has not been measured, and after CFCs are banned it still won't be measured."

As for the Antarctic hole, it appears to be nothing more than a seasonal variation, generated by the long Antarctic night. It was first measured in the 1950s, long before CFCs could have been responsible. The possibility that an active, chlorine-spouting volcano, Mt. Erebus, has all along been a factor in Antarctic ozone seems not to have been taken seriously by Government Science until a year or so ago.

Tom Bethell is The American Spectator*'s Washington correspondent.*

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It is ten miles upwind from the measuring station in McMurdo Sound and its peak is only a thousand meters below the Antarctic stratosphere. I gather French scientists are now investigating the volcano.

Who is Sherwood Rowland? Al Gore says in *Earth in the Balance* that after he "announced his disturbing discovery," he "suffered a form of scientific persecution. Suddenly he was no longer invited to address as many scientific meetings." This "persecuted" scientist, incidentally, became president of the American Academy for the Advancement of Science in February 1992. A few months earlier, while acting president, Rowland had been a prominent signer of the Morelia Declaration, published as a one-third-page ad in the *New York Times* in 1991. One excerpt: "If the latter half of the 20th century has been marked by human liberation movements, the final decade of the second millenium [sic] will be characterized by liberation movements among species, so that one day we can attain genuine equality among all living things."

Despite this kookiness, the anti-CFC mission has succeeded beyond the environmentalists' dreams. The U.S. was among fifty-nine nations to sign, at Montreal in 1987, a treaty agreeing to phase out the chemicals. Richard Benedick, the chief U.S. negotiator, wrote in *Ozone Diplomacy* that "perhaps the most extraordinary aspect of the treaty was its imposition of short-term economic costs to protect human health and the environment against unproved human dangers . . . dangers that rested on scientific theories, rather than on firm data. At the time of the negotiations and signing, no measurable evidence of damage existed." No such evidence exists today.

There was a follow-up scare in 1992, with a NASA press conference warning of a dangerous new ozone hole opening up above the United States. *Time* magazine duly echoed that "danger is shining through the sky," and Senator Al Gore, whose apocalyptical book had been published only a few days earlier, said that parents must teach their children "to think of the sky as a threatening part of their environment." The Senate resolved, by a vote of 96-0, that CFCs should be phased out even more rapidly. President Bush signed on the dotted line, ordering a production ban by the end of 1995.

"The NASA revelations were exquisitely timed to bolster the agency's budget request for its global climate change program, whose funding is slated to double by fiscal 1993," Ronald Bailey wrote in *Eco-Scam*. Melvyn Shapiro, chief of meteorological research at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration told *Insight*: "What you have to understand is that this is about money." Then he was silenced. By then, though, pseudoscience supported by budget conscious agencies had produced far-reaching political and technological change *without any political debate at all*—an astounding achievement by the environmentalists.

"It matters a great deal," the late Dixy Lee Ray, the former Atomic Energy Commission chairman, wrote in *Environmental Overkill*, "because our entire food transportation and marketing system depends on refrigeration, which in turn depends on CFCs. The integrity of many medicines, vaccines, inoculations, and the entire supply of blood for surgery and transfusions also depends upon refrigeration." The Third World will be particularly hard-hit.

The first effects will be felt this summer. Air conditioning in general is going to become more expensive; many large apartment and office buildings cooled by central chillers will find themselves saddled with EPA regulations, but most important, drivers are going to find that repairing or recharging their automobile air-conditioners has suddenly become much more expensive. Estimates for "retrofitting" units range up to $800. In some cases this will be more than the car is worth. About 20 million cars need air-conditioning services every year, and 43 percent of them are in Southern states.

There are going to be a lot of disgruntled Sunbelt motorists this summer. They will be looking for someone to blame, and Vice President Gore, who has referred to CFCs as "the most dangerous substance known to man," comes to mind. This irresponsible comment—what about plutonium?—shows how careless and arrogant environmentalists have become. They have been emboldened, of course, by the total absence of Republican opposition on environmental issues, ever since the Environmental Protection Agency was founded by President Nixon.

Recently, however, the Clinton administration has shown signs of recognizing the political danger of unchecked green fanaticism. In mid-December the EPA contacted DuPont (which manufactures half the CFCs in the country), and was "pretty insistent" that the company should continue making Freon through 1995. In what looked like a display of conspicuous green virtue, DuPont had earlier agreed to phase out production ahead of schedule. Now it was being urged to cook up another 76 million pounds of life-threatening substance. A letter from Rep. John Dingell, chairman of the House Committee on Energy and Commerce, told why. There's a danger of "a possible consumer backlash," he told the EPA administrator. When *he* says jump, the EPA says how high, because bureaucrats' jobs are at stake. In no time they were on the phone to Wilmington, Delaware, and DuPont (with some reluctance, apparently) said it would comply.

The greens were maddened by this outbreak of politics. But the justification offered by the director of EPA's office of atmospheric programs was more revealing. The additional production was okay, he said, in view of "the relatively small change in the ozone layer." Oh. Now they tell us.

For all its doom-mongering, Gore's book has nothing but good news about the prospects for replacing CFCs with more benign substitutes. "They are being developed much faster than the naysayers predicted," he wrote. But the *New York Times* reported last December 26: "The industry does not think these [recycling] initiatives can entirely head off a shortage unless a replacement is developed that can be easily substituted for CFC-12 in older cars." Companies "have been working on such a product, but they have not produced a breakthrough."

Fred Hallett, a vice-president of White Consolidated Industries, makers of refrigeration equipment, told me that "CFCs, and in particular CFC-11 and CFC-12, were ideal for their purposes. The alternatives we have had to turn to are all less suitable. Some are less efficient, and all are more expensive."

As Fred Smith of the Competitive Enterprise Institute said, the last thing in the world the environmentalists want is any public suspicion that their freewheeling regulatory activities cost us money. This summer we are going to find out that they do, and at last we may see a political backlash. ❐

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The MIA Cover-Up

Seeking to normalize relations with Vietnam, President Clinton, along with supine politicians and a feckless press, would like the public to forget the MIA issue. But evidence continues to emerge that far more men were left behind than has been reported—and that some may be alive today.

by John Corry

As shown by the enclosed Casualty Data Summary, a total of 1,303 American personnel remain officially unaccounted for after the completion of Operation Homecoming. . . . Of the 1,303 personnel, the debriefs of the returnees contain information that approximately 100 of them are probably dead.

—Defense Intelligence Agency memorandum to Deputy Secretary of Defense William Clements, May 22, 1973

The intelligence indicates that American prisoners of war have been held continuously after Operation Homecoming and remain[ed] in captivity in Vietnam and Laos as late as 1989.

—unpublished report by Senate investigators, April 9, 1992

HANOI, Vietnam (Reuter)—U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Winston Lord said Tuesday as conclusively as anyone can, that there are no U.S. prisoners of war (POWs) being held in Vietnam. . . . "There has never been evidence uncovered of someone being held alive," he told a news conference after talks with Vietnamese officials. —December 14, 1993

A terrible truth is now emerging: Recently declassified documents and other sources show that America's MIA-POW policy has been disfigured by denials, half-truths, and evasions. More important, they also suggest that American prisoners are still crying out in Vietnam. For two decades, a cover-up has been in progress, sustained not so much by conspiracy as by government ineptitude, a bureaucratic unwillingness to draw obvious conclusions

John Corry is The American Spectator*'s regular Presswatch columnist and author of the new book,* My Times: Adventures in the News Trade *(Grosset/G.P. Putnam's Sons).*

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from incontrovertible facts, and a failure of national resolve. It is now certain that we left men behind in Southeast Asia—not merely the handful we now unofficially acknowledge in Laos, but in numbers reaching well into the hundreds in Vietnam. It is equally certain that American officials ignored evidence of this at the time.

To understand the moral catastrophe we must go back twenty-one years. Henry Kissinger and Le Duc Tho, a senior member of the Hanoi Politburo, signed the Paris Peace Accords ending the Vietnam war on January 23, 1973. "We have been told that no American prisoners are held in Cambodia," Kissinger told reporters the next day. "American prisoners held in North Vietnam and Laos will be returned to us in Hanoi." One week later, however, President Nixon sent a secret letter to Premier Pham Van Dong of North Vietnam, reflecting an unpublicized understanding reached by Kissinger and Le Duc Tho. Nixon told Pham that the United States would "contribute to postwar reconstruction in North Vietnam," in an amount that would "fall in the range of $3.25 billion of grant aid over five years." He also said that "other forms of aid . . . could fall in the range of 1 to 1.5 billion dollars."

None of the aid was ever extended, and even the existence of the letter was not disclosed until years later. If the aid had been extended, however, Vietnam might have returned all its prisoners. The precedent was clear. The Vietminh guerrillas of the 1950s had held back an unknown number of French soldiers after the fall of Dien Bien Phu. France quietly ransomed them back with government aid. Moreover, a 1969 study by the Rand Corporation had said that "a quid pro quo that the DRV [Democratic Republic of Vietnam] is likely to demand—and one that the United States may want to consider accepting—is the payment of reparations to North Vietnam in exchange for U.S. prisoners."

The study went on to say that the United States could avoid the appearance of paying reparations if it publicly labeled them "part of the U.S. contribution to a postwar recovery program." Nixon's letter, of course, offered just such a contribution. The study concluded as follows:

> It would be unduly optimistic to believe that the DRV and the Vietcong will release all U.S. prisoners immediately after conclusion of an agreement in the expectation that the United States will meet its military, political or monetary commitments. More likely, they will insist on awaiting concrete evidence of U.S. concessions before releasing the majority of American prisoners.

But the concessions, or aid programs, were not forthcoming. There was no possibility they ever could be. Nixon would soon be undone by Watergate, and Congress wanted no more of the war. In the delirium of the time, some thirty senators had even called for unilateral withdrawal from Southeast Asia, without the imposition of any conditions on North Vietnam. Hanoi would be trusted to return all its prisoners. When it did release 591 POWs, in Operation Homecoming in March 1973, however, it was apparent that something was wrong. Hundreds of hospital beds had been set aside for the returnees; it had been assumed many would need medical attention. The 591 returnees, though, included no amputees or burn cases; there was no one maimed, disfigured, or blind. It is reasonable to believe that the most afflicted POWs either remained in Vietnam, or were murdered.

Nonetheless, no questions were publicly raised about this or, indeed, any other substantive matter, and on March 29 President Nixon addressed the nation on television. "For the first time in twelve years, no American military forces are in Vietnam," he declared. "All of our American POWs are on their way home." Few seemed to hear what he said moments later: "There are still some problem areas. The provisions of the agreement requiring an accounting for all missing in action . . . have not been complied with. . . . We shall insist that North Vietnam comply with the agreement."

Sen. John Kerry, the committee chairman, told one of the investigators that if the report ever leaked out, "you'll wish you'd never been born."

But we did not insist; for one thing, we had no "leverage" to do so. Congress had walked away from the war. In May, the Senate rejected a Republican amendment that would have allowed continued bombing if Nixon certified that North Vietnam was not trying to account for all the missing in action. Certainly, there already was evidence that men had been left behind. The Casualty Data Summary mentioned in the Defense Intelligence Agency memorandum at the top of this story, for example, notes that, besides the 1,200 or so men whose fate was unknown after Operation Homecoming, 65 were still held as prisoners: 29 in North Vietnam, 27 in South Vietnam, five in Cambodia, and four in Laos. Moreover, there was general agreement that the figure for Laos represented only a fraction of the real total. Several declassified documents suggest the number should have been in the hundreds. A March 1973 memo to the Joint Chiefs of Staff says, "There are approximately 350 U.S. military and civilian PW/MIAs in Laos." An earlier memo to Henry Kissinger says that some 215 of the 350 "were lost under circumstances that the enemy probably has information regarding their fate." No information was ever forthcoming, however, and only twelve prisoners returned from Laos.

Thus, even from the beginning, the POW issue was shrouded in ambiguity. There are, though, some salient facts. The Defense Intelligence Agency memorandum cited above says 1,303 men were still unaccounted for after Operation Homecoming, and that the debriefings of the returned POWs indicated that approximately 100 of them

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were probably dead. Therefore, some 1,200 might still have been alive. (A later Pentagon document gives a precise number of 1,278.) The possibility that they were alive, however, was ignored, and even misrepresented. A deposition given in 1992 by Dr. Frank Shields, the former head of the Pentagon's POW/MIA Task Force, to the Senate Select Committee on POW/MIA Affairs is instructive. In the deposition, Shields describes an April 1973 meeting with Deputy Secretary of Defense Clements, who had summoned him to his office to discuss the Pentagon's public posture on men missing in action:

> DR. SHIELDS: He [Clements] indicated to me that he believed that there were no Americans alive in Indochina. And I said: I don't believe that you could say that . . .
>
> I told him that he could not say that. And he said: You didn't hear what I said. And I said: You can't say that. And I thought he was probably going to fire me . . .
>
> QUESTION: What did you interpret that to mean, "you didn't hear me"?
>
> DR. SHIELDS: That I was fighting the problem. You remember that there were a lot of people at the time who wanted to declare victory, okay? And I think that maybe at that point in time he believed that we had what we had, and that was all we were going to get, and that there was no one there.

That Colonel Hynds was captured alive seems indisputable; the Pentagon, however, has always listed a Col. Wallace Gurley Hynds as killed in action.

This meant that even though there was no evidence to prove that some 1,200 men—or, to use the exact figure, 1,278 men—were dead, the Pentagon would assume they were. Intentional or not, it was the beginning of the cover-up, and it would have a far-reaching effect. The tacit assumption that the men were dead would harden into official policy. Henceforth, all official figures on POWs and MIAs would be suspect. The grotesque part, though, is that even the figure of 1,200—or 1,278—might have been too low. As an intelligence estimate, it was worthless.

That was because in addition to the 1,278 MIAs about whom the Pentagon had no firm information, an almost equal number of MIAs had been declared dead. Most were classified as KIA/BNR, or killed in action/body not recovered. Over the years, however, a growing body of evidence has cast those early KIA/BNR figures in doubt. More men were left alive than we thought. Ironically, much of the evidence about this is now coming from the Vietnamese. In 1991, American investigators from the Joint Casualty Resolution Commission were allowed to visit a Vietnamese military museum in Vinh City in Nghe Tinh province. In their written report, the investigators say they were shown items from the museum's collection, and then given a two-page excerpt from the museum's register. Then they were allowed to examine the register itself. They took notes on information in the register that was "pertinent to significant exhibit items they had been allowed to examine." Their report continues:

> The entire register was then reviewed for entries concerning additional items of interest. During this process, it was noted that a number of items mentioned in the register excerpt did not appear in the register. In addition, there were numerous gaps in the register where items that had been examined by the team were not included. This suggests that the register viewed by the team was not original as claimed by the museum staff, but in fact had been selectively recopied from an original at some time in the past. The team also noted that certain items of high interest that appeared in the register were not available for examination. Museum officials claimed that these items were not available because they had been lost, destroyed or lent to other museums.

Characteristically, the Vietnamese were trying to hide something. The investigators were shown pre-selected items. Then they were shown not the register that listed all the items, but instead an excerpt from the register. Apparently, they insisted then on examining the entire register, and when they did, they discovered it was a fake. Moreover, "certain items of high interest" that were supposed to be in the museum were missing.

The investigators, however, listed in their report the items they were able to see, literally translating the museum's own descriptions. They found, for example, "a flag used to request food used by the American colonel pilot Hynds, Wallace G., and was captured at Ha Tinh," and "bandit pilot identification card number FR 15792 of Hynds, Wallace Gouley and was captured alive in Ha Tinh on 28-5-1965."

That Colonel Hynds was captured alive seems indisputable; the Pentagon, however, has always listed a Col. Wallace Gurley Hynds as killed in action. There are six other men whose names were found in that one provincial museum who were all listed as being captured alive, although the Pentagon had declared them all dead.

The inescapable conclusion is that MIA lists were flawed from the outset. More men were captured alive than anyone thought. Recently declassified transcripts of the conversations of Vietnamese anti-aircraft gunners, monitored by the National Security Agency, reinforce the conclusion. The gunners talk of American planes being brought down, and of their pilots being captured by soldiers or villagers. The National Security Agency has correlated the transcripts with the names of the pilots. Although the Vietnamese themselves talk about the pilots being captured alive, at least some of them were classified by the Pentagon as "presumptive finding of death," or "killed in action/body not recovered."

The indications that a large number of men were left

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behind after 1973 have become compelling. A North Vietnamese military doctor, who defected to the South in 1971, told American officials that Hanoi was holding hundreds more prisoners than it had acknowledged. In 1979, another Vietnamese Communist defector told the Defense Intelligence Agency that in the mid-1970s Vietnamese officials had talked about holding 700 American prisoners as "bargaining assets."

The 700 figure cannot be dismissed; neither can the idea of bargaining assets. Last April, Stephen J. Morris, a Harvard scholar, disclosed that he had found the Russian translation of a 1972 report by Lieut. Gen. Tran Van Quang in Communist Party archives in Moscow. Quang said that North Vietnam was holding 1,205 American prisoners—614 more than it released the next year. Last September, the Pentagon itself released the translation of an account of a Vietnamese Communist Party meeting held in late 1970 or early 1971. It quoted a Vietnamese official as saying that Vietnam held 735 "American aviator POWs," although it had acknowledged holding only 368.

"The total number of American aviators in the SRV [Vietnam] is 735," the official declared. "As I have already said, we have published the names of 368 aviators. This is our diplomatic step. If the Americans agree to the withdrawal of all their troops from South Vietnam, we will, as a start, return these 368 people."

The Defense Department did not try to discredit the Vietnamese document, perhaps because it attracted so little attention in the press. It said only that it could not vouch for the document's authenticity or accuracy, and that it had come "from the files of the GRU—Soviet military intelligence." On the other hand, the Quang report that Morris had found in Moscow attracted a good deal of attention, and the Defense Department reacted accordingly. When extracts from the document were published in the press, the Pentagon attempted to have the full document classified. Eventually it said that "while portions of the document are plausible, evidence in support of its claims to be an accurate summary of the POW situation in 1972 are far outweighed by errors, omissions and propaganda that detract from its credibility."

In fact, the errors were not errors; they were really the weakest of quibbles—that the 1,205 prisoners, for example, included both American POWs and South Vietnamese commandos. (Morris replied that Vietnamese Communist documents always drew a distinction between American and South Vietnamese troops.)

In Hanoi, meanwhile, Gen. John Vessey, the presidential emissary to Vietnam on POW-MIA affairs, said he had spoken to General Quang and that Quang denied he had made the report. "I have no reason to disbelieve him," Vessey said, although he had no reason to believe him, either, and indeed one excellent reason to think Quang was lying. Quang could hardly admit that North Vietnam had held more prisoners than it had ever acknowledged. The only way Hanoi could account for them now would be to confess that it had lied in the past.

Vessey also attempted to discredit the document itself. It said that in 1970, after American forces had raided the prison camp at Son Tay, only twenty-three miles from Hanoi, North Vietnam had dispersed POWs among other camps. Vessey said this could not be correct. After Son Tay, he insisted, POWs were not dispersed among other camps, but instead were concentrated in fewer camps. He also said that North Vietnam could not have held 1,205 prisoners because that would have required it to have a separate prison system; and neither U.S. intelligence nor the POWs who returned from Vietnam, he said, were aware of such a system.

Vessey was making a strange argument. If Hanoi kept a separate prison system for the POWs who were not returned, the POWs who did return would hardly be aware of it. Both sets of POWs would have been held in separate places. It must also be noted now that Admiral James Stockdale, testifying before respectful senators at the POW/MIA hearings in 1992, also dismissed the idea of a separate prison system. Stockdale, who survived seven years as a prisoner, thought that after the Son Tay raid, all POWs were brought into the camps in Hanoi. He also described the "tap code" that POWs used to pass messages from cell to cell; through the tap code and other means, he said, the POWs were able to keep track of one another, thus assuring that none would be lost, murdered, or spirited away without their comrades' knowledge. Stockdale, who suffered severe torture and eventually inflicted a near fatal wound on himself to

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convince his captors that he would never accede to their propaganda demands, was sure no POW was left behind after Operation Homecoming; he was also sure there was no separate prison system.

Stockdale, though, was wrong. It is a mark of many good men who went to Vietnam and upheld the highest standards of courage, honor, and decency that they are unwilling to believe their country might have abandoned other good men. The empty rhetoric about "healing" the wounds from Vietnam, spoken so shamelessly by press, politicians, and old peace activists, might have some meaning now if it were directed toward Stockdale and those like him.

Reports from Communist defectors and other sources make it clear that the North Vietnamese were aware of the prisoners' tap code and could manipulate it as they chose, excising the names of some POWs and introducing false data about others. Moreover, while Stockdale and the other POWs in Hanoi thought they knew the names and locations of all the American prisoners, it is obvious they did not. Nine men captured in Laos spent years in the Hanoi prison system, separated from other POWs only by the width of stone walls, without the other POWs knowing they were there.

It is on the matter of a separate prison system that government orthodoxy about POWs begins to unravel completely. The boat people who fled Vietnam in the 1980s brought with them information about a prison system that was larger and more complex than we had known. Even before the arrival of the boat people, though, U.S. intelligence agencies suspected that Hanoi had held POWs outside the known prisoner system. The known system consisted of thirteen camps—eight outside of Hanoi and five within the city. One difficulty in tracking information about them is that a camp, or prison, may be referred to one way in a DIA report, say, and another in a POW debriefing. Xom Aplo, or Xom Ap Lo N-51, for instance, may be called Bat Bat, after a nearby village, or Briarpatch, or even Tic Tac Toe, which refers to the configuration of some of its buildings.

But some reports are clear enough. A CIA document, only recently declassified, suggests that POWs were held in camps other than the ones identified during the war. The CIA document is handwritten, unsigned, and undated, although the content indicates that it was put together several years after Operation Homecoming in 1973. That it is handwritten is suggestive; it indicates that someone in the CIA wanted to make certain information part of the permanent record, but did not want to attract much attention when he did.

The document begins:

> In response to recent human source reporting on American POWs still in North Vietnam, we conducted a photographic study of selected prison/detention facilities in the northern portion of the country. Our study concentrated on comparing known American POW camps with various other detention camps. The purpose of our study was to determine if any signatures of American presence could be found at these other camps. . . . Our analysis did reveal some irregularities in the North Vietnamese prison system between 1970 and 1973. The irregularities do not provide conclusive evidence of American presence at other camps; however, this possibility cannot be disregarded, and precludes drawing a firm conclusion that all the camps which held American POWs have been identified.

The CIA analyst was only being cautious. He had gone back to look at old photographs to determine how many camps had reacted to the Son Tay raid in 1970 "by constructing new defensive positions such as AAA [anti-aircraft artillery] sites, AW [automatic weapon] positions, trenching and/or foxholes." The Son Tay raiders—Special Forces troopers, Army Rangers, and Air Force volunteers—had swooped in by helicopter on Son Tay, only twenty-three miles from Hanoi, in an attempt to rescue prisoners. Unfortunately, the prisoners had been moved to another camp, although the raid itself was a victory. Hundreds of North Vietnamese regulars were killed, while not a single raider was lost or injured, and all returned home safely. They had shown that American forces could strike within reach of downtown Hanoi.

The CIA study made the reasonable assumption that camps holding POWs would react to the Son Tay raid by immediately shoring up their defenses against the possibility of a similar helicopter attack—with new anti-aircraft gun positions, trenches, foxholes, and so on. Indeed, the study found that this is exactly what six camps that were known to be holding American prisoners did. More important, it also found that seven camps that were not known to

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be holding prisoners—Tuyen Quang, Ba Vi, Ban Puoi, Xam Tang, Chom Lai, Coc Mi, and Xom Giong—reacted the same way.

Judging from this reaction "and the fact that several reports have been received recently stating that Americans are still being held in North Vietnam," the CIA again said cautiously, "the possibility of a second prison system for the detention of American POWs cannot be disregarded."

Of course it cannot; the only reasonable explanation of why the Vietnamese would have fortified the camps that way is that they were used to hold prisoners. In fact, the Defense Department had speculated along these same lines before the CIA did. The CIA study was made during the mid- or late 1970s; a Defense Department report, dated July 26, 1971, adds another camp to the list of places where North Vietnam probably held prisoners. Aerial photography revealed that new gun emplacements were also constructed at the Cam Chu prison immediately after the Son Tay raid. "It is reasoned," the report says, "that Hanoi was taking steps to thwart other possible SAR [search and rescue] efforts to rescue U.S. PWs."

No American, however, was repatriated from any of these camps during Operation Homecoming.

Quang could hardly admit that North Vietnam had held more prisoners than it had ever acknowledged. The only way Hanoi could account for them now would be to confess that it had lied in the past.

In the appalling history of POW-MIA policy, though, nothing is more scandalous than the issue of live sightings. Since 1975, the Defense Intelligence Agency has received more than 15,000 live-sighting reports about American prisoners in Southeast Asia. Approximately 1,650 of the reports are first-hand. That means a source says he has actually seen an American held in captivity, or under conditions that cannot be easily explained. The remainder of the reports are hearsay; a source says he has been told by someone else about an American, or many Americans, held in captivity. These live-sighting reports have come from many sources—refugees, defectors, diplomats, and travelers—with the preponderance from refugees. Many of the reports, even the ones that are hearsay, are quite specific, with physical details, exact locations, and an abundance of certifiable facts.

No live-sighting reporting, however, has ever been accepted as proof by the Defense Intelligence Agency that an MIA is still alive, or ever has been alive, in Southeast Asia.

This defies the laws of probability. It also moves us into the area of culpable negligence. It is permissible now to wonder if the Defense Intelligence Agency has ever been seriously interested in uncovering the truth about our missing men, or whether it has always been an instrument in a cover-up.

Criticism of the DIA, much of it from MIA family members, became so harsh and insistent in the 1980s that the agency assigned a team to investigate itself. This led in 1986 to the Director's PW/MIA Task Force Report, or the Gaines Report, after Air Force Col. Kimball M. Gaines, who was its principal author. Consider the following excerpts, both dealing with live sightings:

> When a case is being worked . . . it is plainly evident that the emphasis is on the investigative side of the question in most cases, where the focus rests on debunking the source more than it does on the analysis of the information itself. It should be noted with trepidation that there are some 600 hearsay reports of live sightings backlogged . . . which have not had any evaluation. And there is no actual proof that this class of report has any less potential for yielding some usable information than do the first-hand sighting reports. The implications of this are obvious to the casual observer, but do not seem to be appreciated by the experts.

And:

> There exists a mindset to debunk. . . . Within PW/MIA Division it has evolved over time as an investigative technique, whereby intense effort is initially focused on veracity of sources with a view toward discrediting them. This penchant has overridden the seeking of the corroborative data necessary to support the sighting. Reinforcing the mindset is the investigative audit trail, which has confirmed an inordinate number of originally promising sources to be fabricators. . . . In the main, sources who volunteer information have no ulterior motive, especially those relocated to the U.S. Sources were very young when they observed the event; others were in dire straits as a result of the war; and, in many cases, the sighting was a fleeting one. Therefore, sources should not be badgered when they volunteer information they do not recall well . . . otherwise word gets around the refugee community and information dries up.

In other words, the DIA bullied those who came forth with information about MIAs; it called an "inordinate" number of them liars; it sought to discredit reports of live sightings. The Pentagon immediately classified the Gaines Report.

Keep in mind now what the report called the "mindset to debunk." It means an unwillingness to believe, and in the eight years since the Gaines Report, it has calcified into official policy. The DIA classifies live-sighting reports by category, ranging from 1A through 9B. The lower categories apply to reports still being evaluated; the upper categories apply to the final evaluations. Here are the categories for the final evaluations; no others are allowed:

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4—This category represents an unresolved status. The analytical evaluation has been reviewed and approved by senior level management—no correlation or further action is possible.

5—This category is used only by managerial personnel and indicates difficulties exist in follow-up.

6—This category shows analytical evaluations reviewed and approved by senior level management which have been correlated to a known individual or incident.

6B—Analytical evaluations reviewed and approved by management which are determined to describe an unidentified individual who is not an American PW-MIA.

7—This represents camp information only.

8—This represents no PW-MIA information. At any time, the management can place a case in this category.

9—This category indicates the analytical evaluation is approved as a fabrication.

9B—This category indicates the analytical findings are approved by management as a possible fabrication.

Obviously, there is a missing category: one that accepts a live-sighting report as accurate. The DIA is programmed to discredit the possibility that anyone was left behind in Southeast Asia, or that anyone remains there now. Its intellectual dishonesty has been stunning, and its investigative process a fraud. On occasion it has seemed criminal.

It is on the matter of a separate prison system that government orthodoxy about POWs begins to unravel completely.

In August 1987, a former South Vietnamese major turned up in Bangkok after being interned in Communist prisons, and was debriefed by the CIA. The major said that in December 1978, five years after Operation Homecoming, he had encountered an American in the Tan Lap prison in northern Vietnam. The American, he said, was lying down in a room near the camp dispensary where injured or sick prisoners were taken to rest. The major described the room and the building in which it was located precisely. He also described the American. According to the CIA report on the debriefing:

> Source [the major] and the American were on the first floor. Source saw the American lying down inside this room. The American was alone. He was Caucasian, between 170 and 180 centimeters tall and weighing about 70 kilograms. He had brown hair and a thick beard. He had a wound on his right ankle that was oozing blood and pus. The American wore some sort of military trousers and a dirty, tattered red and white striped shirt. Source asked the American in English, "What is your name?" The American replied, "Jackson." Jackson then said, "You will stay here a long time." When source saw Jackson's wound, source took six penicillin tablets which were hidden in the cuffs of his trousers and offered them to Jackson. Jackson took only four. Jackson added that "there were 16 of us; 15 have gone out already." . . . A vehicle came to the front of this rest area the same evening and Jackson was taken away.

The CIA station in Bangkok passed the major's story on to the DIA in Washington in August. Following bureaucratic protocol, it also asked the DIA for permission to polygraph the major. If he passed the polygraph, of course, it would authenticate his story. What happened then is detailed in the cable traffic between the defense attaché in the Bangkok Embassy and the DIA in Washington. Stony Beach is intelligence jargon for the DIA; SIRO refers to the CIA:

> *Bangkok to Washington, September:* SIRO has transferred this case to Stony Beach, and strongly urges that source be polygraphed as soon as possible. . . . SIRO is very high on this source. The debriefer involved states source was very forthcoming, open, and seemed completely candid. . . .
>
> *Bangkok to Washington, October:* Source has expressed his willingness to be polygraphed. . . . If this is unacceptable . . . please advise by immediate message, and if possible, provide a rationale for not polygraphing source which can be provided to SIRO.
>
> *Bangkok to Washington, October:* Request your immediate attention to this case. It's possible SIRO may simply conduct the poly without your input.
>
> *Bangkok to Washington, October:* Can someone . . . stay on top of this for us?
>
> *Bangkok to Washington, October:* We have been queried several times by SIRO on the status of this case. In each case we have replied we are awaiting guidance from our headquarters. After six weeks, this wearing a bit thin.
>
> *Washington to Bangkok, October:* Regret delay in response. . . . Liaison obligation . . . may have forced our polygraph hand on this source. . . . Request major provide a complete and detailed description again of how these events ensued. . . .
>
> *Bangkok to Washington, November:* Source answered all questions in a direct manner. His answers were consistent when interviewed over a three-day period.
>
> *Washington to Bangkok, November:* Do not polygraph source . . . on his reported live sightings until further notice.
>
> *Bangkok to Washington, February, 1988:* Please advise status our request to polygraph source.
>
> *Washington to Bangkok, March:* . . . This source does not sustain the minimum level of plausibility that requires testing by polygraph. . . .

In April, the DIA issued its official evaluation of the major's story; it called it a "fabrication." It said that former South Vietnamese commandos who had been in Tan Lap prison had never seen an American; therefore, the major could not have seen one, either. The DIA also said the man the major described could not have been wearing a red-striped shirt because "red-striped uniforms went out of use circa 1970." Furthermore, the DIA asserted:

> A computer-assisted search of all missing personnel reveals only one unaccounted for individual whose first, middle or last name is Jackson; he was lost on 21

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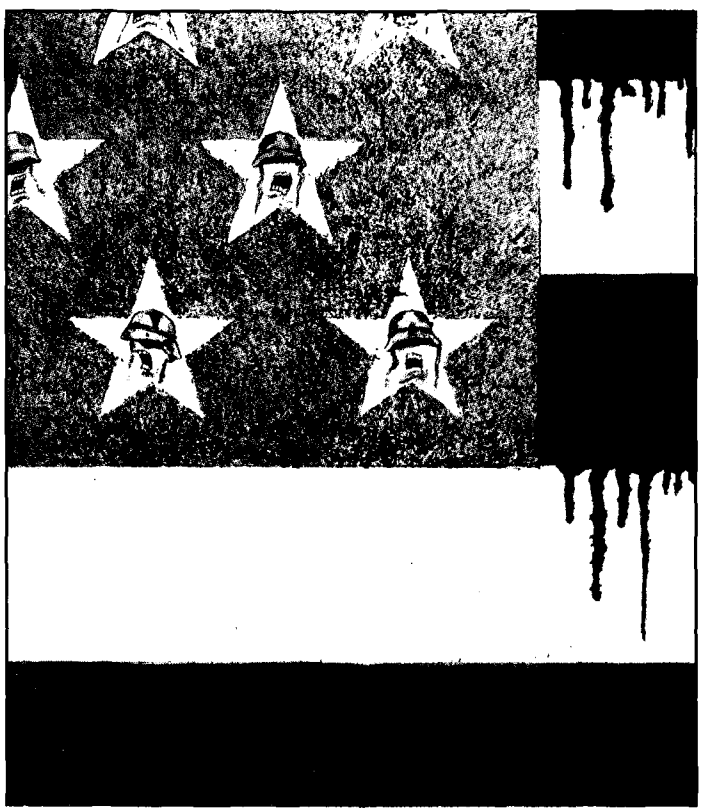
September 1969 under unusual circumstances from a medical treatment room within a hospital cantonment area in the 3d Marine Division area of South Vietnam. While we cannot preclude this individual from consideration, based on the above, it is likely that the source has fabricated his story.

Whatever the merits of the rest of the DIA's argument, the assertion that only one Jackson was missing was, if not a careless mistake, then certainly an outright lie. Besides the unfortunate Marine lost under unusual circumstances, three other Jacksons are missing in action. All three are classified as "KIA/body not recovered," and surely one of them is the man the major saw.

Tan Lap, where the major was held, has another distinction as well. It is one of five Vietnamese prisons—the others are Quyet Tien, Yen Bai, Ha Son Binh, and Thanh Hoa—where, according to reports from the boat people and others, POWs were buried in cemeteries in the late 1970s and early 1980s. The reports are credible; some are from former Vietnamese prisoners who say they dug the graves. Not one of the cemeteries, however, has been excavated by any of the teams now looking for MIA remains. Instead, the teams dig up old crash sites. The crash sites yield little or nothing; the cemeteries could yield a great deal—evidence, perhaps, about men who were murdered. It seems, though, that the Defense Department does not want to know.



The DIA's abysmal record led the six staff members on the Senate Select Committee on POW/MIA Affairs who were charged with investigating intelligence reports to re-examine, in 1992, the 1,650 first-hand live-sighting reports. They dismissed the reports that seemed least plausible; they also dismissed the ones that had been correlated with known individuals, the Marine Robert Garwood, for example, who returned from Vietnam in 1979. Then they dismissed the reports in which the source said he had seen only a single man who might have been a prisoner. They reasoned that a single man, even if he appeared to be a prisoner, might have been a deserter or a straggler and not a POW.

That left the investigators with 929 first-hand live sightings, all involving two or more men allegedly seen in conditions indicating they were prisoners. The investigators then plotted the 929 sightings on a map of Southeast Asia, using pins to mark each one. Cambodia drew no pins; Laos and some areas of Vietnam drew only a few. Other areas of Vietnam, however, drew pins in clumps or clusters. In every place where there was a cluster, there was also a Vietnamese prison. The investigators, who, for technical reasons, were using live-sighting reports that extended only through 1989, drew an obvious conclusion: "that American prisoners of war have been held continuously after Operation Homecoming and remain[ed] in captivity in Vietnam and Laos as late as 1989."

The conclusion, however, was not welcomed by the DIA, or even by most members of the Senate committee. On the morning the investigators were scheduled to present their report to the senators, one senator's aide let the Pentagon know what the investigators intended to say. A team from the DIA immediately showed up to rebut their presentation. The investigators protested; their briefing was supposed to be closed to outsiders. In a remarkable display of bad judgment, however, the senators voted, 7 to 2, to allow the DIA to attend the briefing.

By all accounts, what followed was contentious. The investigators and the team from DIA shouted at each other. Several senators shouted, too. John Kerry, the committee chairman, told one of the investigators that if the report ever leaked out, "you'll wish you'd never been born." Senator Kerry wants to normalize relations with Vietnam. When the briefing was over, Frances Zwenig, the committee's staff director, ordered that all copies of the investigators' report be destroyed. She also said she wanted their computer files purged. Zwenig, who is now the executive assistant to United Nations Ambassador Madeleine Albright, also wants to normalize relations with Vietnam.

In its 1,123-page final report on the hearings, the committee reached an evasive conclusion: "We acknowledge that there is no proof that U.S. POWs survived, but neither is there proof that all of those who did not return had died. There is evidence, moreover, that indicates

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the possibility of survival, at least for a small number, after Operation Homecoming."

The ambiguous language moves the cover-up to a higher plane. Buried in the 1,123 pages—and in thousands more pages of unpublished depositions—are pieces of information that sit like time bombs. Ambiguous language or not, the committee report confirms that satellite imagery has picked up the distress signals, and even the names, of downed American pilots on the ground. The distress signals—combinations of letters and numbers—appear in numerous photographs taken after, not before, Operation Homecoming. Characteristically, though, the Pentagon says they are not distress signals at all. Rather, it insists, they are combinations of lights, shadows, and vegetation that only appear to form GX2527, say, or 72TA88.

(The Pentagon's word is not reassuring. In 1988, the CIA discovered a large "USA" etched in a rice paddy in northern Laos, along with what appeared to be the letter "K," a symbol used by downed pilots. A full four years later, the Defense Department sent a team to investigate. The owner of the rice paddy, it reported, said his son had "made the USA symbol by copying it from an envelope because he liked the shape of the letters.")

The satellite imagery is compelling. The GX in GX2527, for instance, are distress letters; 2527 is the secret four-digit number of Air Force Col. Peter Matthes, who has been missing since 1969. The Pentagon says that the GX2527, which showed up on the ground near Vietnam's Dong Vai prison in a photograph taken in June 1992, was not a man-made distress signal but a photographic anomaly. However, Larry Burroughs, a retired Air Force colonel who once headed the National Photographic Interpretation Center, the government's main imagery laboratory, insists it was man-made. Burroughs, who was brought in by the committee as a consultant, also found other, previously unidentified, distress signals among the satellite images. He also found the letters WRYE. The committee's final report dutifully notes this, but without indicating that WRYE is any more than a random collection of letters. In fact, Capt. Blair C. Wrye of the Air Force, shot down over North Vietnam on August 12, 1966, is an MIA.

Meanwhile, new information about the satellite imagery has come to light. It is now known, for example, that on June 5, 1992, a satellite picked up S-E-R-E-X, etched on the ground near Dong Vai prison. Major Henry M. Serex, an Air Force electronic warfare officer, was shot down over Vietnam on April 2, 1972. The Pentagon lists him as dead.

The satellite pictures in themselves do not prove that anyone is still alive; some of the distress signals may have been made years ago. On the other hand, some of them may be new, and others perhaps are being carved out or etched into the ground even now. At the very least, they are further proof that a cover-up has been, and still is, in progress. We have broken faith with men who fought for their country, and we are being blighted by an ever-widening moral stain. ❒

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Maybe Clinton should read his mail from time to time.

It might help!

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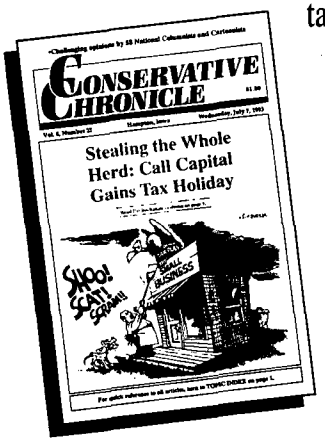

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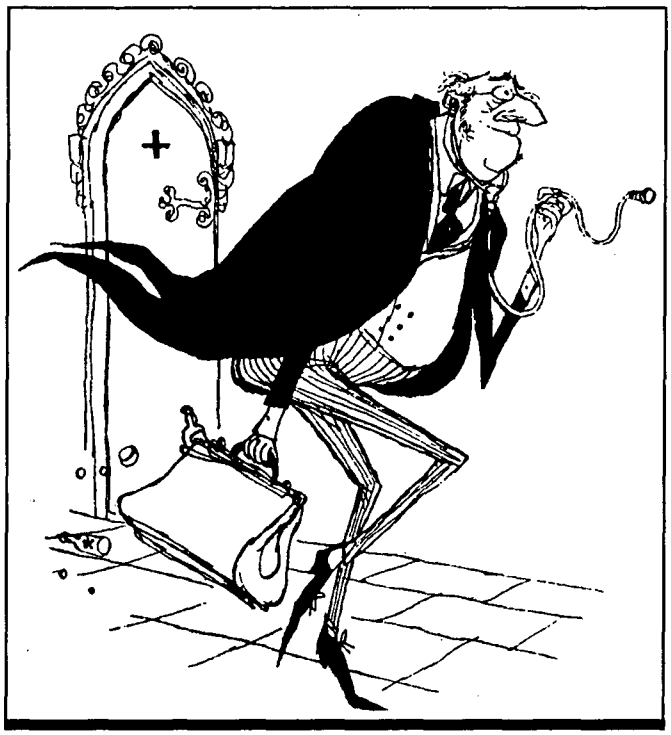
Fred Barnes

Health Care Costs Are Going Down

At least in the private sector—and Bill, Hillary, Donna, et al. don't want to hear about it.



President Clinton has a story and he's sticking to it. "Rampant medical inflation," he declared last September in unveiling his health-care plan, "is eating away at our wages, our savings, our investment capital, our ability to create new jobs in the private sector and this public Treasury." A month later, he sent the plan to Congress and said ominously: "If we do nothing, almost one in every five dollars spent by Americans will go to health care by the end of the decade." Don't sugarcoat it, Clinton was advised just before Christmas by William Cox, vice president of the Catholic Health Association. It's worse than that. "Sometime in the next thirteen years we're going to be spending 22 to 25 percent of our income on health care," Cox said. At that rate, "if you want to go out for dinner and a movie, you're going to have to check into a hospital." Clinton chuckled at the joke. "That's pretty good!" he said.

It was hogwash. There's a new direction in health-care costs—down, down, down. No, spending isn't actually declining. That will never happen in a nation with rapid population growth and lifesaving but costly advances in medical science. But the rate of growth in medical spending is dropping precipitously. Every month brings a fresh decrease in what the U.S. Labor Department calls "price inflation for consumer medical goods and services." It was 5.8 percent for the year ending last August, 5.7 percent for October, 5.5 percent for November. That's still nearly twice the rate of general inflation, but a lot better than 1989 (8.5 percent) or 1990 (9.6 percent). In fact, the 5.5 percent increase is the lowest since January 1974. Better yet, the 4.9 percent rise in the third quarter of 1993 was the lowest quarterly hike since 1973. And it's a good bet medical inflation will fall further.

Don't thank Bill and Hillary Clinton. The downward trend is the product of a revolution in health-care financing caused by market forces, not government. It started several years before the Clintons arrived in Washington and began harping on "skyrocketing" (Hillary's favorite adjective) medical cost increases. It was triggered by businesses and consumers confronted in the late 1980s with annual health benefit increases of up to 20 percent or more. Corporate health plans cover roughly 140 million Americans. Something had to give, and it has. For the first time in years, the percentage of payroll costs devoted to health and dental insurance dropped from 8.4 percent in 1991 to 8.1 percent in 1992, according to a U.S. Chamber of Commerce study of 1,100 firms.

Fred Barnes is a senior editor of the New Republic. *His article "What Health-Care Crisis?" appeared in our May 1993 issue.*

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Such signs of downward pressure on health-care costs are largely the result of two changes. One is the willingness of businesses—especially insurance companies and firms that self-insure—to challenge medical bills. Dan Clark, a benefits consultant in Seattle for Howard Johnson and Co., recently advised a client whose employee had been murdered to balk at a $75,000 hospital bill (the victim had lingered near death for five days). The mere threat of hiring a firm that aggressively scrutinizes medical bills prompted the hospital to slash the bill by $15,000. This process, once rare, is now routine. "The thing the large employer did early on, the small employer is now doing," says Clark. One result: growth of the total cost of private health insurance premiums decreased from 18.6 percent in 1988 to 12.1 percent in 1991 and 10.1 percent in 1992, the consulting firm Foster Higgins found.

More important, companies are steering employees away from fee-for-service medicine (with each doctor visit billed) and into managed care, particularly health maintenance organizations (doctor groups charging an annual fee per patient). This lowers insurance payments. HMO membership has doubled since 1986, from 25 million people to an expected 50 million this year. Not only are HMOs less expensive than fee-for-service medicine, their premium hikes have fallen for five straight years, from 16 percent in 1990 to 5.6 percent in 1994. A 1993 study concluded that if all Americans went to HMOs the 19 percent chunk of GDP projected for health care in 2000 would shrink to 15 percent. Then there are "preferred provider organizations" (PPOs), networks of doctors who agree to discounted fees. Clark surveyed fifteen Seattle-area companies at random recently and found every one was part of a PPO network with cut-rate fees. One result of the surge in managed care: fewer patients hospitalized and a decline in the growth of hospital expenses nationally, from 10.2 percent in 1992 to 8.1 percent in 1993.

What's striking about the revolution in health costs is the absence of government. "This revolution has been driven by frustrated employers," says Michael Bromberg, executive director of the Federation of American Health Systems. "They've forced the insurance industry to change from an indemnity industry to a managed-care industry. It's all happened without legislation." The real question, he adds, is whether Washington "will accelerate that trend or screw it up."

Don't get your hopes up. While the private sector has begun to get a grip, the federal government allows its health-care programs to roar out of control. "Medicare and Medicaid have tripled since 1982," Clinton correctly told an entitlements summit in Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania, in December. Medicare spending jumped 12 percent in 1992. Medicaid is expected to grow 16.6 percent in 1993. That's just at the federal level. State outlays for Medicaid rose 30 percent from 1991 to 1992. By 1996, states will spend more on Medicaid than on education.

If you suspect the cost revolution in the private sector undermines health-care reform, you're right. "There's a torpedo heading for the great ship health-care reform," says Democratic Senator Bob Kerrey of Nebraska. By mid-1994, he says, HMO cost increases will have dropped to the rate of inflation (about 3 percent) and non-HMO price hikes will be well under twice the inflation rate. Numbers like those alarm the Clinton administration, since they knock out the overarching rationale for Clinton's sweeping plan. "They can't let the public think this has gone very far, because it takes the steam out of what they want to do," insists Paul Elwood, the respected health-care expert at the Jackson Hole Group and father of the managed care movement. (Elwood's son David, by the way, is an assistant secretary of health and human services in the Clinton administration. As a Harvard professor, he came up with the idea of cutting off welfare recipients after two years on the dole.)

"There's a torpedo heading for the great ship health-care reform," says Democratic Senator Bob Kerrey of Nebraska.

The administration and its allies are desperately seeking to minimize the new trend, particularly because it's beginning to draw press attention (from *Business Week* to *Fortune* to *Time* to columnists James K. Glassman and George Will). Clinton offered this putdown: "A couple of times before when an administration's made a serious effort at health-care cost control, health-care costs have moderated for a year or so, then they start up again." He cited the Nixon administration as an example. HHS Secretary Donna Shalala echoes Clinton. "We clearly have had some experience," she said in December. "Every time a president starts talking about health-care reform, there has been some moderation, probably a mixture of politics and economics going on." Buttering up Clinton at Bryn Mawr, she added, "Certainly there has been some moderation under your administration." She credited the "Hillary factor."

Clinton and Shalala are dead wrong. Their implication, of course, is that insurance companies, doctors, and hospitals hold down cost increases when Washington is threatening to impose controls, then jack up prices wantonly once the crisis passes. This hasn't happened. National health-care expenditures have risen less in some years than others, but for economic, not political, reasons. When President Nixon put on price controls, the rise abated. When controls were lifted, its rapid climb resumed. Chatter about reform hasn't been a factor. Consider 1986, the year national health

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expenditures rose by the lowest percentage (7.6) since 1961. Was President Reagan jawboning the health-care industry in 1986? Get serious.

The *Washington Post* suggested in a December editorial that health-care providers are purposely defusing the crisis atmosphere as Clinton's legislation moves through Congress. This makes superficial sense. "Nobody wants to invite special attention while restrictions and ceilings are being written into the bill," the *Post* said. True, but nobody wants an artificially low floor for health-care prices as price controls are being enacted, either. This means health companies have an incentive to get large price *increases* now, because they won't be able to impose them later under the Clinton plan.

Contrary to the administration's line, the current dip in health cost increases reflects what Paul Elwood calls "a fundamental and permanent change." It's structural, not temporary. There are, Elwood says, "very basic differences in provider and purchaser behavior." Take HMOs, which didn't exist on any scale before the mid-eighties. They've gained from experience, becoming leaner and more cost-effective as they've had to compete for customers. Many HMOs participating in the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program, which covers nine million federal workers and their dependents, offered dramatically reduced fees for 1994. That's actual cuts, not merely cuts in the growth rate. For example, U.S. Healthcare slashed the employee payment for its "high family" plan by 29 percent. Overall, the 300-plus plans competing for the business of federal bureaucrats this year averaged fee hikes of 3 percent.

Contrary to the administration's line, the current dip in health cost increases reflects what Paul Elwood calls "a fundamental and permanent change."

What's been done in the private sector? The examples are many and spectacular. But first, a question: Why hasn't all this free-market cost-trimming been reflected in the government's projections on national health expenditures? The Congressional Budget Office last October predicted health spending at 18.1 percent of GDP in 2000, down from its June projection of 18.9 percent, but still quite high. Well, there's a simple explanation: the government is operating off of old numbers. The most recent year for which it has calculated national health expenditures is 1991. So that's its baseline for projections. But in 1991, the revolution in private health-care financing was just getting off the ground. Its full impact hadn't been felt.

That was the year Digital Equipment Corporation began offering a new series of health plans. Employees can go to an HMO that's part of the company's program or outside the HMO network. But they pay a bigger share of their medical expenses if they go outside. By 1993, 70 percent of Digital's employees were enrolled in HMOs, up from 30 percent in 1990. And the yearly increase in HMO fees paid by the company has fallen from 12 to 14 percent in 1992 to 9 percent in 1993 and 4.5 percent this year. It paid a higher rate for fee-for-service insurance, but fewer employees chose that option.

It wasn't until 1992 that International Paper, whose medical costs had been rising at better than 20 percent a year, gave its employees an incentive to be cost-conscious in buying health care. It boosted the level at which the company would pay 100 percent of expenses and began informing employees how much it would pay for each medical procedure and how much physicians in their area charge. The idea was to encourage employees to shop around. The firm has also shown employees a video on how to negotiate lower fees with recalcitrant doctors. One emboldened employee got $400 shaved off the cost of his knee operation, according to the *Wall Street Journal*. Overall, the firm's annual increases in medical costs have fallen to 9 percent—not a breathtaking improvement, but good for starters.

IBM has produced even more impressive savings from its mental health program. It negotiated fees with a network of 20,000 providers nationwide and cut its spending in half, saving $30 million annually. Four corporations in Cincinnati—Procter & Gamble, Kroger, General Electric, and Cincinnati Bell—banded together to prod the city's fourteen hospitals to reduce wide disparities in treatment fees and hospital stays. This generated a 10 percent drop in the average hospital stay in 1992 from 1991 and a 5 percent decrease in the cost per case (an average saving per hospital admission of $350). After health insurance premiums soared 30 percent in 1990, *Forbes* magazine gave its employees an incentive to avoid filing claims for routine medical care. They'd be refunded twice the difference between their major-medical and dental claims and $500. The results are eye-popping. In 1992 claims fell by 23 percent and the magazine's insurer, CIGNA, gave it a $200,000 rebate. Premiums were then cut 17.6 percent for major-medical and 29.7 percent for dental. In 1993, *Forbes* boosted the refund to twice the difference between their claims and $600.

I could go on and on, citing both companies and health-care organizations that have increased efficiency and cut costs while maintaining quality. (The Washington Business Group on Health has published such a list, in a booklet called "The Health Reform Challenge: Employers Lead the Way.") It's not the private sector but the federal government that has failed to curb exploding costs.

There's an obvious solution here: extend the managed-care revolution to Medicare and Medicaid. This,

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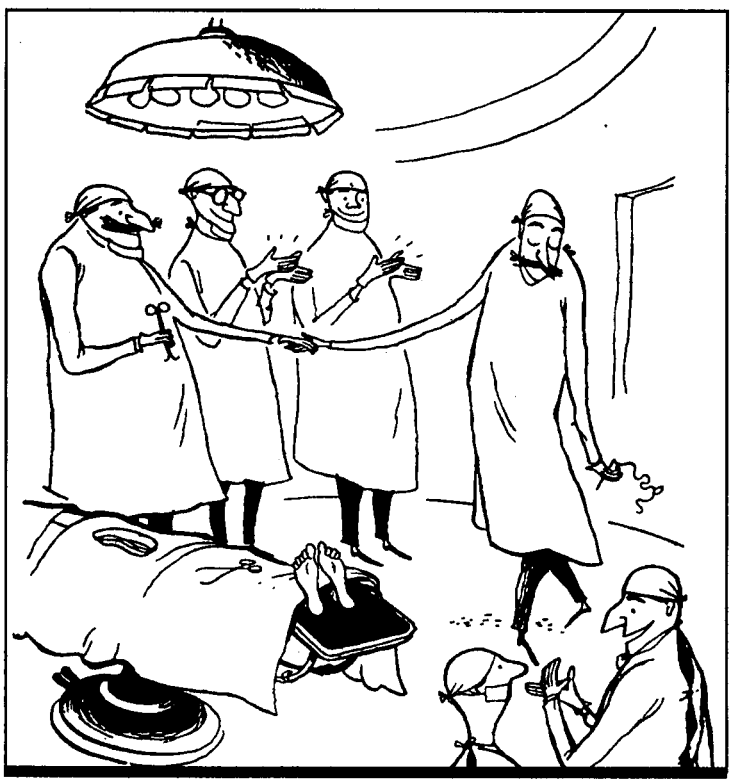
rather than reforming the entire health-care system, should be Clinton's first priority. Billions could be saved simply by sending Medicaid patients to HMOs, a step implemented thus far only in Arizona, and billions more by encouraging Medicare beneficiaries to try managed care. The savings in Arizona haven't been epic—6 percent less than traditional Medicaid costs—but with its large number of retirees the state had start-up problems other states won't face. Elwood is convinced that, through HMOs, Medicaid costs can be stabilized at the level of general inflation and patients can get better care.

Medicare is trickier. The Clinton administration backed away from steering the Medicare elderly into HMOs after a study found the government was losing money by doing so. Only 2.5 million of the 36 million Medicare beneficiaries had signed up for HMOs, and these tended to be the younger, healthier ones. The government was paying HMOs too much for their care. The answer is either to pay HMOs less or get more Medicare patients, including the older, less healthy ones who need more care, enrolled. Or both.



Bringing managed care to government programs is the brainchild of David Harrington, vice president of Chicago's Grant Hospital and former chief strategic planner for Aetna Insurance. "Energy and creativity are already producing results in the private market," he told columnist Morton Kondracke. They can do the same with Medicaid and Medicare. More broadly, Harrington insists, market forces, if left alone, will gradually push down insurance costs far enough so that small employers can afford to cover workers. And if the government chooses to let the uninsured join HMOs, perhaps with subsidies, we'd have universal coverage. Of course, there would still be medical inflation. Heavy demand for care, the intensive brand of medicine practiced in the United States, pharmaceutical research, technological innovation, union contracts with lavish health benefits, a growing and aging population—these guarantee some inflation. But it would stay near the general rate of inflation.

One thing stands in the way: the Clinton administration. Its health-care plan would remove the force driving the downward trend in health costs—businesses that insure employees—from the game. Under Clinton's scheme, companies would pay a set amount to a "health alliance" and have no further involvement. They would have no financial incentive to curb the health costs of their employees. Their bottom line wouldn't be affected if workers rang up heavy medical expenses.

In fact, Clinton's scheme would spur individuals to do exactly that. And this would drive up medical inflation, not control it. Clinton's plan, as he put it at a White House meeting in January, would guarantee "comprehensive benefits that can never be taken away." The benefits—including thirty psychotherapy sessions a year, treatment for drug abuse and alcoholism, eye exams, and so on—would be much broader than most Americans now have. My guess is folks would take advantage, as they have in Germany and Japan (where doctor visits occur three to six times more often than here). This would increase national health expenditures. Or, if a cap were put on health-care spending, inflation would take another form, waiting lines for medical care, as it has in Canada.

Don't count on preventive care, Hillary's favorite solution, to hold down costs either. True, patients would get more preventive care, because the Clinton plan includes it, free. But there's no evidence this would lead to lower medical costs later as a result of early detection. More likely, it would create a large increase in costs—just to pay for the burst of preventive care. And, sorry to say, more preventive care will have only a marginal impact on the serious diseases like cancer and heart trouble that generate huge health-care costs.

In his first chat with White House staffers in 1994, the president set the stakes very high in the fight over health-care reform. It's a question, he said, of "whether we are going to be able to maintain a health-care system and still have the money that we need to invest in a growing and highly competitive global economy so that America will be strong." Clinton has the right question, but the wrong answer. Instead of accelerating the revolution in health-care financing that has contained costs while protecting the best medical system in the world, he would end it. Not smart. ❐

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Byron York

Clinton's Phony Drug War

Do-nothing drug czar Lee Brown has cabinet status, but no ideas, no goals, and no money—which is just the way the president wants it.

A man in a dark suit stands in front of an office building near the White House, speaking into his cufflink in the standard security style. A few moments later a black limousine pulls up. Two more dark-suited men get out and stand guard while the driver waits behind the wheel. The back door opens and out walks the object of all this protection: not a visiting head of state, nor a top elected official, nor even a Hollywood star in town to testify on Capitol Hill. The man in the car is Lee P. Brown, America's "drug czar," a man who has been given the trappings of power even as he presides over the slow death of the war on drugs.

Brown, unlike previous drug czars, is a member of the president's cabinet. Bill Clinton, speaking with Brown at his side last April, said he elevated the drug czar to the cabinet "because I believe drug abuse is as serious a problem as we have in America." But after taking that largely symbolic action, the president proceeded to sabotage the drug war. With Brown at the cabinet table, Clinton has slashed the czar's staff, cut him out of the White House loop, and taken away his power to play any substantial role in the government's effort to stop drug abuse. And, by many accounts, Brown lacks the boldness, inclination, and skill to fight back.

Today, as a result of Clinton's cuts and Brown's acquiescence, the Office of National Drug Control Policy, known around the White House as "the drug office," cannot fully perform its job of overseeing the government's multi-billion dollar anti-drug effort. It cannot make sure Congress is going in the right direction on the issue. In fact, given its low budget and the high price of cabinet-level perks given Brown, the office can scarcely afford to do anything more than sustain the drug czar himself.

The crippling of the drug office has annoyed Congress to the point that influential lawmakers in both parties now want to do away with the drug czar altogether. Brown's office survived a near-death experience on Capitol Hill last November—but won just a tentative one-year lease on life. Next year the czar's office might well become the first cabinet agency ever to disappear.

The drug issue was a difficult one for the Clinton campaign. The Arkansas governor promised to combine tough law enforcement with expanded treatment and prevention programs. And he promised to name a strong drug czar—one who would really get things done, not like the "political hack" (as Paul Begala and James Carville described Bob Martinez) whom George Bush had appointed. But at the same time, Clinton's "didn't inhale" problem made it impossible for him to make drugs much of a campaign issue. And, when courting younger voters, he seemed to take a softer line on the subject, as he did during an interview on MTV in June 1992:

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Q: If you had it to do over again, would you inhale?
A: Sure, if I could. I tried before. [laughter]

As president-elect, Clinton ignored the issue. Transition teams spread throughout several federal agencies, and holdover staffers at the drug office spent their time preparing materials for the expected Clinton team. "We sent them over to the Clinton people," says one former staffer, "and got no response." They never got one—nor was there any contact between the Clinton transition team and the drug office until a few days before the inauguration.

Although Clinton announced nominees for all cabinet posts during the transition, January 20 came and went and the new president—despite his plan to make the drug czar a member of the cabinet—failed to name a candidate for the job. Instead, his first action on drugs was to cut the drug office staff by more than 80 percent.

He did it to fulfill another campaign promise: to cut the White House staff. Since the new president made few changes in the number of White House policy and image-making positions (if anything, he increased staffing in some of those areas), he had to find other places to cut. Possible targets were the Office of Management and Budget, the U.S. Trade Representative, and the drug office. One former drug office staffer describes how the choice was made: "Leon Panetta gets appointed [at OMB]. A savvy guy. Mickey Kantor [at USTR]. A Friend of Bill. They're talking about a staff reduction. And there was nobody there to represent the drug office." Panetta's OMB was exempted from cuts, Kantor's office untouched. But in February the drug office was cut from 146 employees to 25, less than half the size of the White House communications staff.

John Conyers quietly blew up. He questioned Clinton's commitment to the drug war. He questioned Brown's influence in the administration.

"I stayed until they announced they would cut it to twenty-five," says John Walters, who was acting director at the time and had been at the drug office since the beginning. "At that point it was just a charade."

Walters's departure left virtually nobody in charge. February, March, and most of April passed; still no drug czar. Unfinished business, like the agency's budget, piled up. In late April, with no czar in place, the administration sent Alicé Rivlin, deputy director of OMB, to congressional budget hearings. Rivlin confessed she did not know a lot about the drug issue. But she said the staff cut, despite most assumptions, was an indication that the drug issue had actually risen on the presidential agenda under Clinton. "It is not that drug policy is less important," she said. "On the contrary it is more important. . . . The problem has been a lack of leadership, not the size of the staff."

A strong drug czar, Rivlin said, would be the most important player in the Clinton war on drugs. And virtually as she spoke, the president finally announced his choice for the job: Lee Patrick Brown.

A career police officer, Brown had nine months earlier quit his job as New York police commissioner (he left for personal reasons). Brown received some good marks for his attempt to implement his professional passion, "community policing." But he left in the shadow of the Crown Heights riot, and the subsequent investigation into his conduct during the riot raised serious questions about Brown's leadership—questions that were not fully considered by the Senate committee that confirmed him.

In "A Report to the Governor on the Disturbances in Crown Heights," New York state's director of criminal justice faults Brown for failing to realize the seriousness of the civil unrest in Brooklyn in August 1991. The report says Brown "did not direct, closely oversee, or monitor the police response to the disturbance." Brown told investigators he asked his commanders how things were going in Crown Heights and was told everything was under control. According to the report, Brown then "simply repeated to the Mayor assurances that had been given to him by others. These assurances did not serve the Mayor well."

Even though the rioting began on Monday, August 19, the report says Brown did not realize the seriousness of the situation until two days later. Wednesday evening, as he accompanied the mayor to Crown Heights, Brown's car "was pelted by rocks and his driver radioed a request for assistance for 'Car One.'" Only then did Brown "experience first-hand the seriousness of the situation on the streets and the apparent ineffectiveness of the Department's response." Summing up Brown's actions, the report says his leadership was "less than satisfactory."

The Senate committee heard testimony from Hasidic Jews who said police failed to protect them during the Crown Heights violence. But the committee did not have access to the state report; it was not released until one month after Brown's confirmation. After the vote, the president told reporters he had not read the report, but if it said Brown didn't do a good job managing the riot, then "he wouldn't be the first police chief about whom you could say that." Brown later said he did not think the report's criticism of his leadership would have had any effect on his confirmation. (Ironically, a few years earlier, Brown's leadership was an issue at the drug office; in 1989 he interviewed with William Bennett for the post of deputy director. "We were looking for someone to forcefully present law enforcement policies, and help make them, too," says a source familiar with those talks. "But he just wasn't very impressive; he was passive." The interview went nowhere.)

Brown started his new job in July; by then the office had been drifting for nearly six months. Staffers worked on their résumés; little if anything got done. "I had lunch with some of my old buddies," says one former staffer. "The career people—many of whom, I might add, supported Bill Clinton, even though the Clinton White House thought it

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was a den of Republicans—they were sitting around their offices just contemplating their navels."

But even with Brown as czar, the office continued to fall victim to the long knives in Washington. In July, the House voted to cut $231 million from anti-drug programs; White House budget officials accepted the decision. Brown, by his own admission, learned about the whole thing when he read it in the *Washington Post*. "We have got to get back in the loop," he told the paper.

Meanwhile, Capitol Hill lawmakers began to consider whether the drug office should stay in business (the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1988 gave the office a five-year lifespan, which ran out in November 1993). A five-year reauthorization was thought to be automatic. But then, in October, Brown appeared before a subcommittee of the Committee on Government Operations.

The hearing was a disaster. Republicans and Democrats, while praising Brown's qualifications, wanted to hear details on how he would conduct the drug war. How are you going to do it, they asked, given the cuts Clinton has imposed? Brown simply had no satisfactory answers. He said being a member of the cabinet was a great asset; even though he didn't have much actual power, Brown said if he needed help he could just call up fellow cabinet members Donna Shalala or Janet Reno and get it. But he offered few specifics, instead asking members to wait until his "interim strategy" was released later.

After a long period of meandering Q&A, chairman John Conyers quietly blew up. He questioned Clinton's commitment to the drug war. He questioned Brown's influence in the administration. He wasn't impressed with the cabinet line. "Either the president is with you, or he has just given you a chair at the cabinet level," Conyers said. "If it is the latter, you are getting ready to be the biggest fall guy in the Clinton administration." Conyers made it clear he suspects that is the case. If so, he said, "we might as well close [the drug office] down and stop the pretense." Conyers abruptly adjourned the meeting with one last threat. The position of drug czar, he said, "was created in this committee room and it will be ended in this committee room."

In late November, Brown appeared before Congress to discuss his "interim strategy," entitled "Breaking the Cycle of Drug Abuse." (Brown had the document printed as a glossy booklet; he ordered 17,500 copies at a cost to taxpayers of $18,960.) But the strategy contained little beyond broad outlines of his earlier statements. He told lawmakers the government planned to ease up on efforts to interdict drugs at the borders, and concentrate instead on anti-drug campaigns in the producing countries. He again stressed the administration's intention to provide more drug treatment and prevention. But he couldn't say how much, and he conceded that Clinton's overall drug budget provided for less treatment than he would like. But the shortfall, according to Brown, would be covered by the president's health-care plan, which would provide generous treatment benefits for all those in need.

Lawmakers who accepted that explanation were infuriated just days later when they read reports that the president's health planners had dramatically cut back their proposal for drug treatment (one of the plan's "technical corrections"). The news seemed the last straw for Brown's credibility. It prompted protest from senators ranging from Ted Kennedy to Dennis DeConcini to Alan Simpson. The drug office had "managed to skillfully undo the relationships" they had with Capitol Hill, says one aide to DeConcini.

There have been other reasons for the deterioration of Brown's relations with Congress. At times he has displayed an extraordinarily cavalier attitude toward members who ask for specifics about his strategy. In October two dozen Republicans, including Newt Gingrich, Dick Armey, Henry Hyde, and Jon Kyl, sent Brown a letter. It was a two-page, single-spaced, detailed list of their concerns about the direction of drug policy since the Clinton inauguration. Brown sent back a brief reply, which began:

> President Clinton's vision of America is one where all Americans have a chance of achieving their hopes and dreams. He envisions an America renewed by reduced drug use and drug-related crime and violence.

Observant congressmen might have noticed a similarity between Brown's letter and his interim strategy, "Breaking the Cycle of Drug Abuse," which began:

> The President's vision of America is one where all Americans have a chance of achieving their hopes and dreams. He envisions an America renewed by reduced drug use and drug-related violence.

Brown did not respond to any of the members' specific concerns.

Finally, Congress took matters into its own hands. First, lawmakers forced the White House to do more—or at least spend more—on the drug war. They rejected Clinton's proposal to cut the drug office staff to twenty-five; they required the office to have at least forty staffers. And they rejected Clinton's request for a $5.8 million office budget, allocating $11.7 million instead.

Then they refused to reauthorize the drug office for five years. They refused to reauthorize it for even two years. Instead, they gave the office just one year to live; its status will be reconsidered this November. In a letter to the president, Rep. Kyl wrote, "If, at the end of this trial year, we have not seen a . . . substantial improvement, we will vote to eliminate the office." Congress acted, says Kyl, "to keep a string on the office. Nobody is happy with the administration's lack of support."

By the end of the hearings process, the Clinton administration had done little more than create a curious coalition of conservative Republicans and Congressional Black Caucus members, both threatening to kill the drug office.

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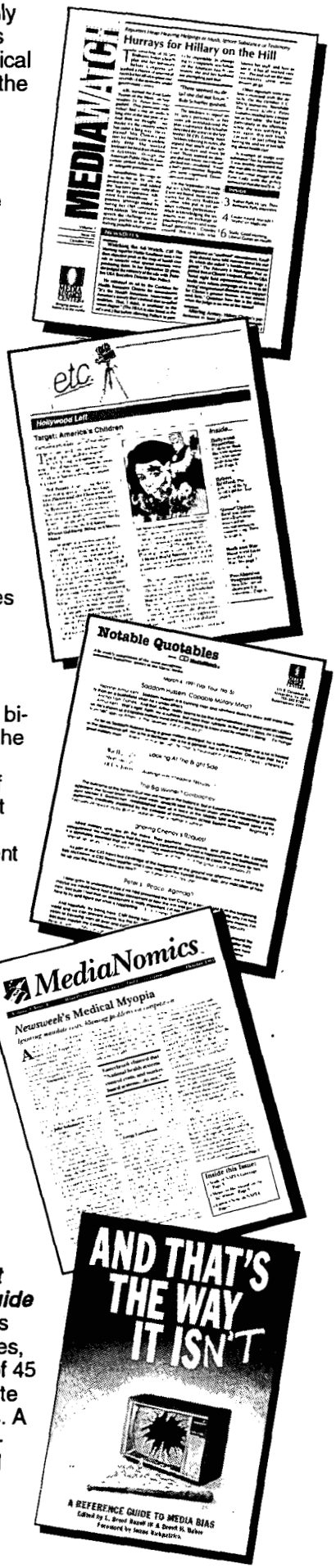

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Ironically, the death threats further weaken the drug czar; agencies that believe he won't be around in a year have no incentive to take him seriously.

But even as Brown's influence disappears, he maintains the trappings of importance. He is, as he frequently reminds people, a member of the cabinet (earning $12,366 a month). And, as it is with some other lesser bureaucrats in the capital, Brown's most visible sign of status is the security that surrounds him. He rarely goes anywhere without agents, limos, and walkie-talkies. To be fair, security has long been a big-ticket item at the drug office. First czar William Bennett was a high-profile, controversial official; since there had never been a drug czar before, nobody knew exactly how much protection he would need. He got a lot. Bennett was protected by a contingent of U.S. marshals, a bullet-proof car, and round-the-clock coverage.

In addition to the marshals, ONDCP hired a private security firm to protect its offices. The first headquarters was a building near Washington's Dupont Circle. Staffers fretted about its design: "Built to be car-bombed," said one security analyst. On top of that, the building just happened to house the Colombian embassy. "We were quite nervous that one day we would be blown up," says Joe McHugh, former director of congressional affairs for the office. And occasional Keystone Kops lapses in security worried them even more. "One day a homeless guy made it into Bennett's office," says McHugh. "Just barged in, said he wanted to see the drug czar." (Bennett wasn't there at the time.)

Whatever the effectiveness, a former official who spoke on condition of anonymity says in the early days the drug office spent about $2 million each year just to protect Bennett. And that did not include the money spent to fortify the building that became ONDCP's new headquarters a few years ago. (The doors to the director's impressive office are built to withstand grenades: "Here's a real Washington power office," Bennett once told some young staffers.)

Former Florida governor Bob Martinez changed the security set-up when he became drug czar. "The threat assessments weren't anything unique," says Martinez. "I reduced security dramatically; I stopped 24 hours." Instead, Martinez made do with just three agents and a driver. But it still wasn't cheap. The former official says protecting Martinez cost about $1 million a year.

When Martinez left, "acting czar" John Walters got rid of the personal security altogether. "The detail is excessive," he says. "I took the subway to work." He was never threatened. And the drug office saved a lot of money.

Lee Brown has reversed the trend. He has chosen to restore the multiple-agents-and-a-driver detail; they're always with him. Even when Brown hosted a recent two-day meeting for state and local drug-fighters at Washington's luxurious ANA hotel, he was accompanied by two agents, with another waiting outside. And Brown's extensive travel further pads a big budget: a source who has worked in the drug office with Brown says the czar is now spending roughly $2 million a year on his own protection, comparable to the highest spending under Bennett. (Brown would not answer questions for this article; a spokeswoman said he was "too busy.")

There are serious doubts about whether any of this is necessary. The source who has worked in the drug office with Brown says the U.S. Marshals' evaluation of the drug czar's security needs concluded that there is *no* domestic threat against Brown, although he might face the possibility of a threat when traveling abroad. Nonetheless, the security bills keep piling up.

What is most remarkable is the percentage of overall drug office spending that is taken up by Brown's protection. The Clinton administration's original $5.8 million budget would have meant that between 30 and 40 percent of drug office funds would have gone simply to protect the drug czar. The ratio astonished one former official of the ONDCP, who says, "I don't think the cartel even knows they exist anymore."

Clinton's handling of the drug office has highlighted weaknesses that have plagued ONDCP since its inception. First, the office has no power to enforce; its influence depends almost entirely on the forcefulness of the drug czar. That problem was masked during William Bennett's term, because he had the ability to cajole, rave, intimidate, and bully the bureaucracy until it did what he wanted. Bennett's replacement, Bob Martinez, did not. He exerted little influence at the White House, and therefore had little influence anywhere else; his time at the drug office was, in the words of one former staffer, "pretty much downhill after the confirmation."

Lee Brown—despite his experience in law enforcement—is no better. The Crown Heights report suggests his management style is thoroughly bureaucratic; he is reluctant to step outside the chain of command to get things done. Unfortunately, such improvisation is exactly what the drug czar's job demands. And making Brown a member of the cabinet—while drastically reducing his budget—didn't make the office any more powerful; the result was just the opposite.

But critics on all sides agree that the drug office's single greatest problem is a president's lack of commitment to the drug war. And that is the clearest lesson of Bush's last years. After Bennett's exit, says one former official, "the White House just decided they had gotten all they could get out of the drug issue." That made it virtually impossible for the office to be effective.

Now the same things are being said about Bill Clinton. Without his support, the drug czar is just an expensive symbol. Unless the president dramatically changes his policy, Congress will probably dump the office altogether, though it'll probably wait until early 1995. (Nobody wants to kill a crime-fighting symbol, even an empty one, in an election year.) Given the recent history of the drug czar, it's likely no one will even notice. ❐

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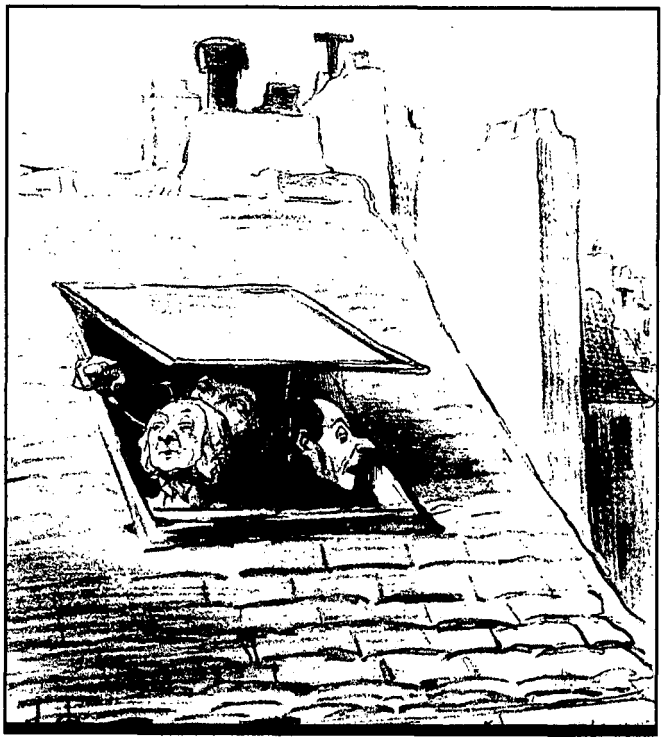
Thomas Sowell

The Unheavenly City Revisited

Edward C. Banfield's classic critique of the American city is even more powerful today than when it was published 25 years ago—but so are the interests that would deny its insights.



Some books are so basic to their subject that you cannot be considered educated without having read them. To talk seriously about the American constitutional form of government without having read *The Federalist Papers* is virtually impossible. Nor can one talk seriously about ancient Greek philosophy without having read Plato, or about the nature of warfare without having read Clausewitz.

For understanding contemporary urban social issues, the classic that is essential is *The Unheavenly City* by Edward C. Banfield. Now in its 25th anniversary year, *The Unheavenly City* is as contemporary as today's news stories—and far deeper in its insights than today's editorials. Indeed, much of what it says directly contradicts today's editorials.

Because painful urban issues are only becoming more acute with the passage of time and the pouring of vast sums of federal "aid" down a bottomless pit, Professor Banfield's insights and framework of analysis are more urgently needed than ever. And because the political, administrative, and ideological vested interests behind the failed approaches of government programs are bigger and more determined than ever to continue on the present course—defining "change" as more money for more of the same kinds of programs—a complete re-examination is in order, not just a re-examination of particular fallacies but a re-examination of the whole framework of misconceptions behind the urban disasters of our times.

At the heart of the many sharp differences in policy recommendations, as between Banfield and others who write on urban issues, are fundamental and irreconcilable differences between their assumptions about the nature of human beings in general and about the kinds of alternatives available to urban policy makers in particular.

The liberal intelligentsia prefer explanations which assume that the harm caused by other people, whether to themselves or to others, is due to circumstances beyond their control—but within the control of government programs designed or favored by the intelligentsia. But Banfield sees much of the crime, violence, drugs, and other social degeneracy that plagues urban communities as being rational ways of responding to given incentives in the light of cultural characteristics and value preferences among the people involved. Given these radically different assumptions, it can hardly be surprising that Banfield and the lib-

Thomas Sowell's most recent book is Inside American Education: The Decline, the Deception, the Dogmas *(The Free Press).*

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eral intelligentsia differ consistently across a whole spectrum of urban problems.

Among the liberal intelligentsia, the issue is what "we" can do for "them"—a somewhat proprietary view of urban residents, especially the poor and minorities, at variance with the spirit of the Thirteenth Amendment. To Banfield, people are not us and them or victims and saviors, nor are the problems of the cities as new and unprecedented as all things appear to be to those who are ignorant of history. The city has never been heavenly—a point he drives home in setting the present urban problems in a historical context, as well as in the title of the book.

Urban riots, for example, are routinely ascribed by the media to pent-up "rage" at oppression and lack of opportunity. Yet Banfield's chapter on the subject is entitled: "Rioting Mainly for Fun and Profit"—a description more in tune with the television and newspaper pictures of looters happily emerging from stores carrying liquor, clothing, and other items than with the surrounding prose describing them as full of "rage." Nor does *The Unheavenly City* treat these riots as something new in history or as peculiar to blacks. Banfield mentions similar riots among whites in Montreal in 1969, in Philadelphia during the nineteenth century, in Boston during the eighteenth century, as well as in Atlantic City, Stockholm, and elsewhere during the twentieth century. "The assumption that if Negroes riot it must be *because* they are Negroes is naive," he said, pointing out that even in some of the ghetto riots of the 1960s, "Negroes and whites mingled on the streets and amicably looted side by side."

Today, of course, such interracial comity in larceny is less common, and Negroes must now be called blacks or African Americans, or some other name that may have surfaced since this essay went to press.

To Banfield, the crucial variable in urban riots, or in much of the other urban pathology, is not a matter of race, but a matter of cultural values and feckless behavior—"an outlook and style of life which is radically present-oriented and which therefore attaches no value to work, sacrifice, self-improvement, or service to family, friends, or community." Those who did not want to confront the Banfield thesis, which cut the ground out from under the whole *Weltanschauung* of the liberal-left, called this picture of lower-class culture "racist," though *The Unheavenly City* itself said, "most Negroes are not improvident, do not live in squalor and violence, and therefore are plainly *not* lower class" in this cultural and behavioral sense of the term.

The whole picture of urban problems in *The Unheavenly City* is less race-specific than in most other writings on the subject, whether from the left or the right. Again and again, it puts contemporary urban problems in historical perspective and provides examples of how such problems have persisted through complete turnovers of the people who exhibit the offending behavior.

Although people today ascribe high infant mortality rates among the poor to "neglect" by a "society" that fails to provide enough prenatal care to those who cannot afford it, a quarter of a century earlier Banfield pointed out that high infant mortality was due not to poverty per se, but to behavior, for the poor Jews in the nineteenth-century slums had very different death rates from other immigrant groups in poverty. Today that same principle holds true, though today it is the Mexican Americans who have infant mortality rates no higher than those of whites, while receiving even less prenatal care than blacks, who have much higher infant mortality rates than either.

Again, the argument is not race-specific, for Banfield pointed out a quarter of a century ago that the infant mortality rates among black males in 1940 was where the infant mortality rates among slum dwellers in general had been for decades—that is, when many of those slum dwellers were white—and that the black infant mortality rate had declined since then. Perhaps Banfield's strongest statement of the behavioral thesis was this:

> If, overnight, Negroes turned white, most of them would go on living under the same handicaps for a long time to come. The great majority of New Whites would continue working at the same jobs, living in the same neighborhoods, and sending their children to the same schools.

In more than twenty years of living in California, I have never seen a Mexican or Mexican American begging in the streets, though I have seen many able-bodied young white men with middle-class accents panhandling.

If this statement seems astonishing, consider the same proposition being put forward in different words more than seven decades earlier by W.E.B. DuBois. After deploring racial discrimination in employment, DuBois said:

> Probably a change in public opinion on this point tomorrow would not make very much difference in the positions occupied by Negroes in the city: some few would be promoted, some few would get new places—the mass would remain as they are; but it would make one vast difference: it would inspire the young to try harder, it would stimulate the idle and discouraged and it would take away from this race the omnipresent excuse for failure: prejudice.

Whether in a racial or a non-racial context, the very idea that people's own behavior has much to do with their misfortunes is anathema to those whose vision of the world is one of helpless victims needing to be rescued by the superior wisdom and virtue of the anointed. Hence it is desperately important for them to discredit Banfield and *The*

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Unheavenly City "by all means necessary," of which charges of racism are just one. The very concept of personal responsibility would put a whole industry out of business, ruin innumerable careers in politics, the media, and academia, and—perhaps worst of all—deal a fatal blow to the egos of those who see themselves as part of a vanguard of compassion and progress, not unlike the famous painting of Liberty leading the people.

In short, big bucks and big egos are at stake in the fallacies that have survived and are still going strong, twenty-five years after *The Unheavenly City* exposed them as frauds. But that makes it all the more important that this classic be reread and its insights applied to contemporary examples of the liberal-left vision that has wreaked such havoc under such lofty rhetoric.

The perennial liberal nostrum of providing "retraining" to give the poor "skills" was shot down by Banfield in 1968. You cannot "retrain" someone who was never trained in the first place—and who has no desire to be trained. "The lower-class person cannot as a rule be given much training because he will not accept it," Banfield wrote, long before the Clinton administration revived this war-on-poverty nostrum under the banner of "change." Nor is it clear that retraining is either necessary or sufficient for people to advance out of poverty.

Despite much mediaspeak which suggests that you must be full of computer-age high-tech skills in order to get jobs, Mexicans cross the border by the thousands every week and go right to work, without any of those skills and often without much knowledge of English. In more than twenty years of living in California, I have never seen a Mexican or Mexican American begging in the streets, though I have seen many able-bodied young white men with middle-class accents panhandling. While Mexicans often start in low-paying jobs, they move up the ladder over the years, much like the European immigrant groups of the nineteenth century. Statistics that separate out those Mexican Americans who were born in this country from those who have just crossed the border show this progress clearly. Those with an axe to grind, however, prefer to cite gross statistics that lump all Mexican Americans together or all Hispanics together.

Specific job skills can be acquired in a relatively short time, certainly in less time than the urban problems described in *The Unheavenly City* have been festering. All sorts of immigrants have arrived in all sorts of countries with virtually no skills—including most Japanese and Chinese immigrants to the United States—and yet risen to prosperity over the years and generations, often in fields in which they had no historic experience and no "role models." No Asian-American youngster of half a century ago was likely to see an Asian-American schoolteacher, scientist, or engineer.

Blacks likewise have been rising occupationally, since long before the Civil Rights Act of 1964, much less "affirmative action" policies. As *The Unheavenly City* notes in a number of places, it is misleading to measure progress by looking at given neighborhoods, for the people in those neighborhoods a generation ago may be living in radically different neighborhoods today, being replaced in some cases by other people still going through the process of preparing for a move upward. Tragically, that movement upward from the bottom may be less likely to take place today than in earlier times, when the barriers seemed higher.

The liberal welfare state has made poverty more comfortable and innumerable liberal innovations in the public school systems have made it far less likely that today's slum dweller will get a decent education with which to launch his rise in the world. Here I can speak from some personal experience. When I checked the math textbook used by my niece in Harlem, I discovered that what she was being taught in the eleventh grade was what I had been taught in the ninth grade. Although I am sometimes credited with an apparently miraculous feat of rising out of the Harlem schools to go on to an academic career, the cold fact is that I did not rise out of *today's* Harlem schools but out of schools from which many others also went on to have professional careers. A black attorney who read one of the gee-whiz accounts of my rise out of Harlem wrote to me:

> I grew up at 143rd and Amsterdam, not far from your neighborhood and lived in a 5-story walk-up tenement. From just that one building came a college president, an M.D., two engineers, a lawyer, a college professor, a high school teacher and a Jesuit priest.

After reading his letter, I thought of some people who

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came out of my old neighborhood, within a five-block radius of 145th Street and St. Nicholas Avenue, back in the 1940s. A kid who lived half a block from me went on to become a psychiatrist, owned property in California's Napa Valley, and is now retired and living overseas. Another kid I knew just retired as dean of one of the colleges in New York. Another fellow who came out of the same neighborhood at the same time did all right in entertainment—Harry Belafonte. About five blocks away, all this during the same years, there was another kid who would grow up and make a name for himself, James Baldwin. Within the same five-block radius, a young man named Colin Powell attended CCNY, though he lived elsewhere.

These were not just isolated individuals in a mass of sheer despair or incompetence. Test scores from the 1940s show the Harlem elementary school I went to—P.S. 5—holding its own with elementary schools on the lower east side, from which many immigrant kids rose to achieve many things in later life. In neither neighborhood were the test scores what they were in more affluent neighborhoods where children had better-educated parents. But neither were the ghetto schools miles behind everyone else, like today.

The message of *The Unheavenly City* is even more applicable today than when it was written. If behavior, values, and performance are the real keys to a better life for the urban poor, all these prerequisites have been undermined by the liberal-left trends of the past three decades. Schools that no longer teach academic subjects at the levels of earlier times are instead teaching racial paranoia and provincialism in the name of "multiculturalism" and are attacking the very idea of right and wrong in the name of "values clarification." Community leaders who used to demand higher standards of their own people are now busy making excuses and laying guilt trips on others, while seeking largess in lieu of achievement. For most people, these political frauds may be an annoyance, but for the urban poor they are deadly in their effects.

Crime has gotten worse since *The Unheavenly City* was first published, but most political "solutions" suffer from the same fallacies that Banfield exposed then. The notion that crime can be reduced by offering more opportunities for "good jobs" was rejected by Banfield as being incompatible with the kind of people who commit crimes:

> Most stealing is done by persons who want small amounts *now*. For them a job that must be worked at regularly and that pays *only at the end of the week* is not a real alternative to stealing.

From this perspective, "the need is not so much for more 'good' jobs as it is for more casual ones." For "radically present-oriented individuals," the criminal justice system must also be swift and certain in its punishment to be effective. For someone whose time horizon is close at hand, even a severe "penalty that lies weeks or months away is not a part of reality for him." In *The Unheavenly City*, the main advantage of imprisonment is its "reduction of the individual's opportunities to commit crimes," rather than either deterrence to others or rehabilitation of the offender himself.

Given this perspective, our criminal justice system operates in a way almost guaranteed to produce more crime. From the time it seeks to select juries with the most remote trace of bias removed to the time it scrutinizes the criminal's childhood in search of mitigating factors before sentencing, the criminal justice system is a breeding site for delays, as swamp water is a breeding site for mosquitoes. Swift and certain punishment is out of the question. Indeed, any punishment at all is rendered less likely by the innumerable new legal technicalities created in pursuit of superjustice, the net effect of which is to destroy the more fundamental justice of retribution for crime. Sometimes even the criminal himself may be worse off in the long run, as the reluctance to punish youthful "first offenders" (whose previous crimes are kept in sealed records because of age) can mislead brash young thugs into believing that the law can be defied indefinitely, so that they end up in later years with far longer sentences for repeat felonies than would have been sufficient to deter them if applied when they first got caught.

The many counterproductive policies exposed by *The Unheavenly City*—and still going strong today—are more than isolated happenstances. Banfield saw these policies as products of a particular way of looking at the world. The "reformer wants to improve the situation of the poor, the black, the slum dweller, and so on, not so much to make them better off materially as to make himself and the society better off morally." In other words, policy-making is ego-gratification—which means that policies that do not gratify the ego are not likely to get very far. Common sense, for example, cannot be very ego-gratifying because it is so common. Speculative theories and "innovative" policies are much more consonant with this mindset than are time-tested policies that ordinary people believe in. In short, being realistic is less important than being one of the anointed. According to Banfield, to demand realism from people with this mindset is itself not very realistic.

Institutionally as well, Banfield saw little prospect of greater realism. Although each new generation in the world of policy-makers and opinion-makers "tend to be open to new ideas," nevertheless they "come more and more under the discipline of large organizations, especially foundations and government agencies, whose maintenance and enhancement depends in some way upon the elaboration of an alarmist, or at any rate expansionist, public definition of the situation." Few predictions of a quarter of a century ago have been borne out so thoroughly, and in fields extending even beyond those covered so masterfully in *The Unheavenly City*. ❐

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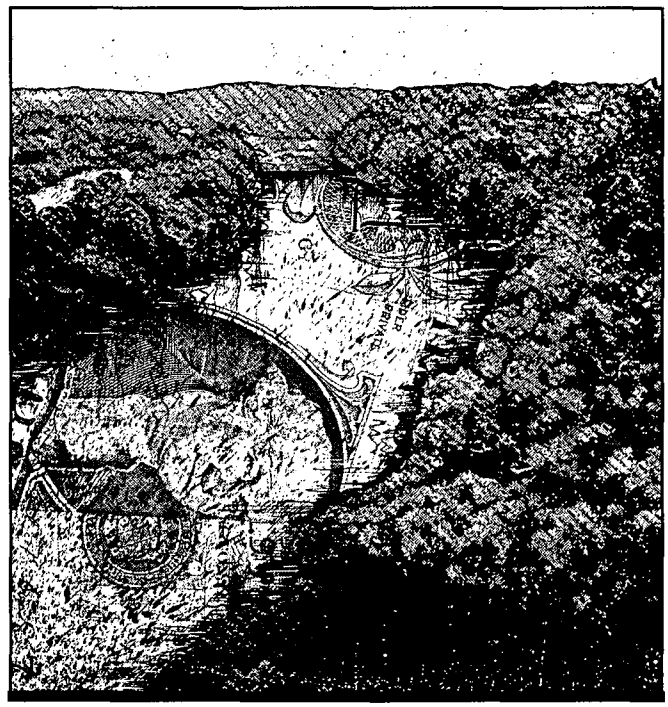
James Ring Adams

Beyond Whitewater

A look into the account books of Madison Guaranty, the S&L run into the ground by Clinton pal James McDougal, shows that the president has more to hide than anyone suspected.



The appointment of Robert B. Fiske as independent counsel with a broad mandate brings a new level of permanence to the Whitewatergate scandal, Bill and Hillary Clinton's involvement in a relatively small real-estate development in the Arkansas Ozarks. Two events brought the furor to this point. The first was the suicide last July 20 of deputy White House counsel Vincent Foster, who was also the Clintons' friend and personal lawyer. The second was the revelation that White House aides entered Foster's office soon after his death and removed files dealing with the Whitewater Development Company. The press, and the public, are asking if something in those files could have caused a sensitive man to take his life. The speculation may be deeply painful to Mr. Foster's friends and family, but the Clintons have egged it on with their extreme reluctance to release the files.

What in these files so upsets the Clinton administration? Are they a legitimate concern for public policy, and multiple federal investigations? Weeks of in-depth interviews with several key participants and the study of several thousand pages of documents have provided The American Spectator *with the beginnings of a reconstruction of the secrets of these files. This evidence, some of which the federal government has forgotten that it has and some of which it so far has refused to hear, shows a pattern of corruption every bit as damaging as the White House seems to fear.*

James Ring Adams is the author of The Big Fix: Inside the S&L Scandal *(Wiley) and co-author (with Douglas Frantz) of* A Full Service Bank: How BCCI Stole Billions Around the World *(Pocket Books). Evan Fitzmaurice helped in the research for this article.*

Whitener and Associates

Freddy Dean Whitener lives in a battered mobile home six miles out of Bradford, pop. 874, in north-central Arkansas. After the hour-long drive from Little Rock, you take the turn at Bradford's one stoplight, just past the auto repair shop with the stacks and stacks of used tires in front, and follow the country roads past the small farms and scattered one-story houses. When the pavement runs out, you know you've gone several hundred yards past the gravel driveway that runs across the creek and up the rise to Freddy's house. A chicken wire pen in the front yard holds a yearling deer that one of his sons found newborn in the woods.

In his early fifties, Freddy is tall and lean, with gray hair and a short salt-and-pepper mustache that he often strokes reflectively. He keeps busy, building a new house nearby, tending a few head of cattle, and occasionally putting together projects in his tool shed. He shows off a bright yel-

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low go-cart that he constructed for his youngest son two Christmases ago, piecing together parts from a tractor, a motorcycle, and two sit-down lawn mowers. He says he worked on it sixteen days and sixteen nights, to keep his mind off his troubles. But sometimes he will walk down the hill past an older son's house and just sit a spell on the log wall next to the long one-story home that the Resolution Trust Corporation took from him two years ago.

Freddy can't remember exactly how many years he lived in the now-empty house. He started building it himself early in his 37-year marriage to his bright, petite wife Dorothy. (Freddy was 15 when they wed; since he was born at home, he was able to add a year or two to his age when he finally applied for a birth certificate.) They raised their six children there, adding rooms as they saved some money. No one else would buy it after the foreclosure, and Freddy winces as he notes all the repairs it now needs.

The RTC took the home during a cold week in January 1991, giving Freddy forty-eight hours to get out. Freddy remembers how his children and the preacher helped carry his furniture up the hill in a sleet storm. "When they came in the house, there was ice on their hair and everything," he said. "That was about the lowest point."

The RTC took Freddy's home in the aftermath of its seizure of Madison Guaranty Savings and Loan, the failed thrift owned by President Clinton's friend and business partner, James McDougal. Whitener has quite a story to tell about his involvement with McDougal and Madison Guaranty, a story supported by extensive documents. But he can't understand why the RTC or its big-time Little Rock lawyer never wanted to hear it. "They made like they never heard of McDougal," he said. Even national reporters would lose interest and close up their notebooks when he told them that none of his papers mentioned Bill or Hillary Clinton. Yet Whitener's financial disaster opens one of the best windows yet into a morass engulfing the president, key administration officials, and much of the Arkansas political elite from which they sprang.

Freddy's business career reads like an episode of "The Honeymooners" written as tragedy, a working man's dream for the big break gone sour. After years of back-breaking labor in construction, spending months from home on pipeline projects, he started building roads around his hometown and took a fling in real-estate development. His first effort worked out. He bought a few hundred acres of raw land, platted it and put in access roads, and retired the mortgage as he sold off the lots. A local real-estate dealer watched his success and tried to talk him into doing the same with several thousand acres. Freddy hesitated to take it on, until he met James McDougal.

McDougal was a hometown boy who made good, a native of Bradford who had gone away to college and a career as a staffer on Capitol Hill. Freddy says he had known McDougal when they were in school, but didn't see him again until 1983, when McDougal came back home. A country boy charmer with a sharp mind, the Washington veteran had decided to build an Arkansas banking empire. In 1980, he took over the Bank of Kingston in the northwest corner of the state and in 1983 bought the ailing Woodruff Savings and Loan, based in Augusta, across the White River from Bradford. He opened a branch in Bradford, giving many local people access to bank credit for the first time. Freddy himself took out a car loan. Then one day, McDougal invited Freddy to lunch. By chance, says Whitener, he had a map of the proposed real estate project on his dashboard, and took it in with him. The deal roused McDougal's ready enthusiasm and by the end of the meal he had talked Freddy into launching a development called Gold Mine Springs.

Freddy doesn't dodge responsibility. He admits that he was blinded by his hopes to make a bundle and that he put too much trust in the wrong person. But no one could really have foreseen the disaster that followed. McDougal and Whitener formed a limited partnership called Whitener and Associates; McDougal drew up papers making Freddy the general partner, which gave Freddy legal responsibility. Freddy signed everything McDougal put in front of him. McDougal's thrift, now called the Madison Guaranty Savings and Loan, put up the down payment. Freddy contributed the sweat of his whole family as equity, calling his children out of college to help clear the building lots and lay down the roads.

The partnership had some advantages for Freddy. Although McDougal never bragged about his friendship with then-governor Bill Clinton, he clearly could pull strings to keep Freddy from trouble. A state geologist once called the sales office to complain about the reference to gold mines in the development's name; although there had been some on the site, they were played out, and he threatened to complain to the state attorney general about false advertising. "When he's sitting in the attorney general's office," McDougal assured Whitener, "I'll be sitting in the governor's office." Later that evening the highly perturbed geologist called Freddy with an abject apology and asked him to report the call to McDougal. "I've been told that if I don't apologize to you by midnight, I'll lose my job," he said.

As Whitener got deeper into the road building, McDougal suggested that his thrift take over all the bookkeeping and payments, and Whitener gave him physical control of the partnership checkbook. It was the worst mistake Freddy ever made. By the time McDougal dissolved the partnership, in January 1986, Gold Mine Springs was facing foreclosure by the original land owner; one of the original buyers, a contractor, had won a suit to claim tens of thousands of dollars in promised payments and the return of his lot, and the new management of Madison Guaranty was pretending it never heard of Whitener and Associates. It got worse. When the RTC closed Madison Guaranty in 1989, one of the hundred minor perpetrators in the half-trillion-dollar Saving and Loan debacle, Freddy learned that the thrift claimed to have loaned him not the $400,000 he could account for, but a total of $1.6 million. He had signed some

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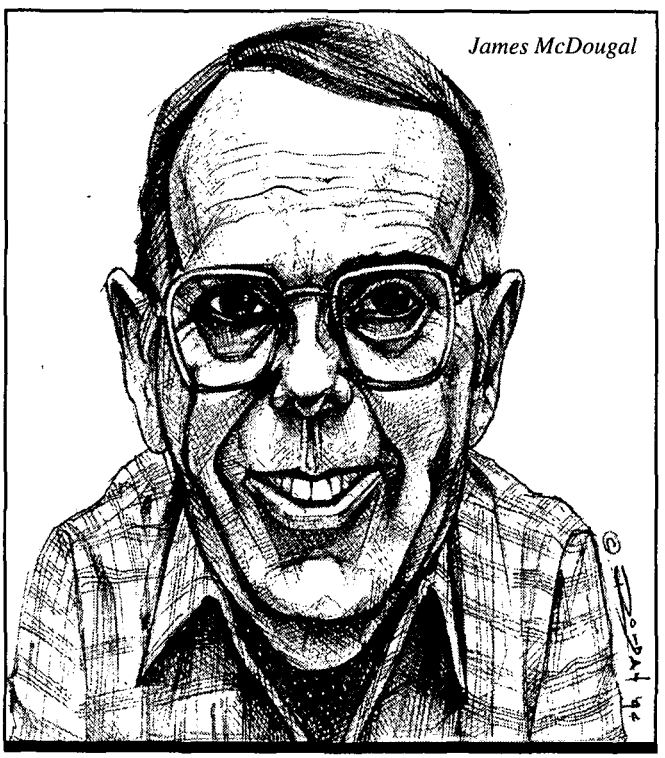
notes because McDougal told him to, but others weren't even in his handwriting. Two of his children remembered seeing one of McDougal's agents sitting in the sales office practicing Freddy's signature. When they asked him what he was doing, he said, "Just doodling."

In 1987 Freddy decided that he should finally get hold of his checks, which hadn't been sent to him in eighteen months. He was astonished at what he found. There were unexplained checks for thousands. In one month, Madison officers wrote checks of more than $60,000 for "closing costs" on parcels whose total value didn't even reach that amount; the payee on all these checks was Madison Guaranty Savings and Loan. Another series of checks doled out more than $30,000 in one week to companies controlled by Jim McDougal's young wife Susan. One check paid a $30,000 "commission" to the agent that Whitener's children had caught practicing Freddy's signature. The two Whitener accounts were overdrawn by nearly $400,000 when the bank tried to clean them up in February 1986. Even so, one account held an overdraft of more than $115,000 for eighteen months thereafter.

Maybe the most depressing part of it all is that the Whiteners for a long time blamed themselves for the debacle, and that McDougal encouraged them in this. "The last words he said to us," says Freddy, "were, 'It was Gold Mine Springs that did me in.' "



James McDougal

Madison Guaranty Savings and Loan

James and Susan McDougal are so central to what is known as Whitewatergate that it is surprising the national press has glossed so lightly over their characters. The real significance of the Whitewater Development, a partnership composed solely of the Clintons and the McDougals, is that it shows Bill and Hillary in such close association with two alleged sociopaths.

James McDougal was tried in 1990 on eight bank fraud charges in connection with Madison Guaranty, and acquitted. So pending the outcome of new investigations in which he was recently subpoenaed, he is innocent in the eyes of the law. (One of his employees, John Latham, the bank's chief executive, went to jail briefly on the same charges.) McDougal's ex-wife Susan, a sexy brunette nearly two decades his junior, shares a tendency for financial scrapes. After their divorce, she moved to Los Angeles and worked for four years as the personal bookkeeper for the conductor Zubin Mehta. The Mehtas are now suing her for allegedly writing 300 unauthorized checks totaling nearly $200,000 for personal restaurant and hotel charges, and she recently pled innocent to state embezzlement charges in California.

By all accounts, McDougal doted on his wife. On the rare occasions when she visited Gold Mine Springs to film a commercial, he would call ahead to the Whiteners and ask them to have her favorite sandwich ready. Afterward, he would call and thank them for taking care of her. "Jim was always very considerate towards us," Freddy says, but no one will say the same about Susan.

As the advertising specialist, Susan made some memorable television commercials for Jim's real-estate ventures, riding in hot pants on a white horse. J. D. Davis, the elderly contractor who was the first settler at Gold Mine Springs, let her use his duck pond as a backdrop and vividly remembers her haughty demeanor as she drove up with the horse trailer and left without saying a word to him. "I'm not used to being treated like dirt," he said. "I didn't like it."

"But she looked good in hot pants," he added.

McDougal can't be excused as the victim of a pretty, voracious wife, however. He ran his savings and loan just like the hundreds of other predatory highfliers of the early 1980s, when criminality infiltrated a large segment of the nation's financial structure. The pattern was thoroughly familiar. A bright go-getter comes home and takes over the sleepy local thrift. He immediately pumps up deposits by offering the highest interest rates around. He draws a lot of money from Wall Street by marketing "Jumbo CDs" of close to the $100,000 maximum backed by federal deposit insurance funds. (These are always popular because of the high interest and the risk-free government backing.) He moves his headquarters out of the backwoods into the nearest financial capital and then plunges his pot of gold into the wildest financial schemes he and his friends can concoct.

Some of these disasters cost the taxpayer fifty times more than McDougal did, but on his own scale, he was as much a part of the breed as were Charles Keating, Don Dixon, or David Paul. Four years after McDougal took control in 1983, deposits at his thrift had swelled from $6 million to over $123 million. He moved from Augusta to a rundown historic section of Little Rock called the Quapaw Quarter and renovated a block-long commercial building as his headquarters. Thrift money began to flow into

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McDougal's own real-estate projects, most of which were doomed from the start or managed into disaster.

By 1986, according to a federal thrift examiner, the "economic justification" for these projects was "questionable." Management didn't bother determining feasibility, relying instead on McDougal's "intuition." Development plans and construction schedules didn't exist, and cost estimates, again, were based on McDougal's "experience." Many of the sales went to McDougal's in-laws and other straw men, who paid for their lots with loans from Madison Guaranty.

Some of the deals involved classic "land flips," in which friends sell a parcel back and forth among themselves, inflating the price each time to qualify for higher and higher bank financing. The federal examiner cited one building that was bought by a Little Rock lawyer, who sold it to Susan McDougal's best friend, who sold it to Susan's brother, who leased it to McDougal for office space. Madison Guaranty gave full financing for each flip, ultimately disbursing $190,000 for a building that originally cost $45,000. The lawyer who made the first purchase was Jim Guy Tucker, now the governor of Arkansas.

One of the flakiest projects amounted to a tribute to McDougal's hero, Franklin Delano Roosevelt. A die-hard Democrat who could mimic FDR's radio "fireside chats," McDougal heard that land was available on Campobello Island, Roosevelt's summer retreat between Maine and New Brunswick. He invested nearly $4 million for a vacation resort even though the examiner noted that it was a three-and-a-half-hour drive from the nearest airport and that roaring tides twice a day opened a mile of mud flats between waterfront lots and the ocean.

Strange as the real-estate plans might be, McDougal didn't need them to work to make a profit, at first. The 1986 examination discovered that he was using the deals to fake the thrift's earnings. Typically, a buyer would make a small down payment on a sales contract, which might or might not lead to full sale later on. But, said the examiner, McDougal would record the full sale price as a done deal and add it to Madison Guaranty's profit. More sensible bookkeeping would have shown that the thrift was losing money almost from the beginning. But by puffing up the profits, McDougal fooled the regulators into allowing him to continue tripling his deposit base yearly.

When the regulators cracked down on deposit growth, as they did in mid-1985, McDougal had a problem common to all financial frauds. To keep alive a "Ponzi scheme," which was the essence of the fast-growing thrifts of the 1980s, you have to bring in new investors to pay off the old ones. If the sucker money is cut off, you have a severe cash-flow problem. To keep Madison Guaranty afloat, McDougal had to pretend he had money that he didn't really have. His solution, it appears from the Whitener books, was to kite checks.

The pattern shows up in all the Madison Guaranty checkbooks that have reached the hands of investigators. Even the Whitewater Development Company account shows an overdraft of nearly $18,000 on November 5, 1984, partly covered over the next week by loans noted to Flowerwood Farms, another McDougal development, and Madison Marketing, Susan McDougal's ad agency (sometimes called Master Marketing). A month later, the account falls back into a near-$6,000 overdraft, and stays overdrawn by thousands until March. This account, which paid bills for Hillary Clinton, pales next to the hundreds of thousands overdrawn against Whitener and Associates, but neither may match the action in the Madison subsidiaries directly controlled by Jim McDougal. A former Madison Guaranty officer acknowledges that overdrafts were part of the business plan for Madison Financial Corporation, the "service corporation" that funneled loans to most of McDougal's deals. Greg Young, chief financial officer from October 1984 to July 1988, told *The American Spectator* that the overdrafts were "tantamount to Madison Guaranty making an investment in the service corporation."

This constant circulation of overdrafts will work, however, only if you can keep some of the accounts out of the sight of the regulators. As in Jean Piaget's studies of infant perception, the object has to be seen as physically disappearing when it goes under a rug. And when it emerges on the other side, it has to be seen as a new and entirely separate creation. Major financial frauds like the Bank of Credit and Commerce International (BCCI) manage this magic trick by maintaining a parallel institution inaccessible to the auditors. McDougal seems to have used his subsidiaries to the same effect. The 1986 examination complains that the checking accounts for Madison Real Estate and Madison Marketing were never recorded on the books of the Madison financial service corporation. And sometime in 1985, McDougal made Whitener and Associates vanish entirely from the records of Madison Guaranty Savings and Loan. These are money trails that independent counsel Fiske should immediately start tracking.

One final element made the thrift frauds work. The big-time highfliers like Charles Keating and the Texas thrift owners devoted a portion of their gains—and only a small portion was needed—to winning political friends. Campaign contributions, and occasionally the offer of lucrative business opportunities, bought them access to senators, congressmen, and state office holders so that when the regulators grew bothersome, a phone call or strategic meeting could take them off the case. Keating, the Arizona thrift owner who cost investors and taxpayers more than $2 billion, could get five senators to breathe down the neck of the Federal Home Loan Bank Board. In Jim McDougal's case, the political patron was Bill Clinton.

The Road to Whitewater

Bill Clinton's friendship with Jim McDougal traces to 1968, when the future president, then a college student, volunteered to help the re-election campaign of U.S. Senator J. William Fulbright. McDougal was running Fulbright's Little Rock office and became Clinton's mentor. In the early seventies, McDougal left politics to manage real-estate investments with his father, while Clinton returned to the state to start his own public career. Their friendships

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grew to include their families. In an interview with the *Washington Post* several months ago, Susan McDougal said the two couples shared "an unbelievable relationship."

In 1978, when Clinton was Arkansas attorney general and making his first run for governor, the McDougals and Clintons joined in a real-estate venture, the now famous Whitewater project. On August 2, the foursome bought 230 acres along the White River from 101 River Development, Inc., a local partnership that was splitting up a larger parcel. In a sample of Arkansas business standards, the secretary of 101 River was also the president of Citizens Bank and Trust in Flippin, a small bank that lent the two couples their mortgage. One of the major shareholders of this bank was Christopher V. Wade, owner of Ozark Realty Company and Jim McDougal's real-estate broker.

In the aftermath of Vincent Foster's suicide, the national press corps crowded into the records vault at the cubical brick Marion County courthouse, wondering why they were there. During the presidential campaign, the Clintons had deflected a brief flurry of interest in Whitewater and McDougal by commissioning a report from a friend and later appointee arguing that they had made no money from the deal. But there were strange things in the land transfers, particularly on Tract 7. Sitting on the junction of Crooked Creek and the White River, this parcel was the largest and apparently the choicest in the subdivision. On October 14, 1980, the Whitewater partners sold it to Chris V. Wade and Associates; adding up the real-estate tax stamps, one would conclude the sale price was $2,000. The next day, Wade sold it to M.T. Bronstad, Jr. for $35,000. In 1985, Whitewater unloaded twenty-four unsold lots (out of the forty-four total) on an outfit called Ozark Air Services, Inc., for no cash at all. Ozark Air was a partnership run by Chris Wade. It was as if the Whitewater partners had altruistically decided to let their real-estate agent take all the profits.

Susan McDougal

Armed with these questions, reporters would pile into their rental cars and take the short jog down Route 62, past tin-roofed farms and a striking valley vista, to Flippin, where Wade's Ozark Realty Company sat at the main crossroads. And there Wade, a puffy six-footer in a baseball cap and rumpled striped shirt, would dissolve their suspicions. Staying long after hours as three or more reporters lined up in the waiting room, he and his wife Rosalee, a pretty frosted blonde, explained that he actually paid $33,250, not $2,000, for Tract 7. "Jim had a problem with revenue stamps," he said. As for the mysterious no-cash transfer in 1985, he said it was a simple swap. "Jim had a lot of lots sitting there that wouldn't sell," he said. "And I had an airplane I didn't want." Wade signed over the airplane, a Piper Cub, and took the lots and mortgage. According to later reports, McDougal arranged to have the plane sold to Seth Ward, a prominent Little Rock businessman and co-investor in a Madison Financial real-estate deal who happens to be the father-in-law of Webster Hubbell, Hillary's former Rose Law Firm partner who now represents the White House at the Justice Department.

As for Whitewater profits, well, the mortgage is paid off, except for some escrow funds, but whatever Wade made didn't help his business. He has recently emerged from Chapter 11 bankruptcy. His office is still comfortable, but a far cry from the firm of several branches that he was running when McDougal first walked in his door in the late seventies. The Clintons could easily have lost the money they said they did, says Wade; Jimmy Carter's double-digit interest rates were eating up all the real-estate profits back then. And the Clintons were definitely passive investors. "I don't think Bill ever set foot in Whitewater," Wade says.

It's a plausible performance and a better defense of the Clintons than anyone at the White House has mounted. But gracious and open as the Wades are with reporters, they speak with a nervous edge in their voice. Too many gaps still pock the record, and even the Wades may not know what's missing.

In the simple matter of paying bills, for example, Wade was surprised to learn that Whitewater Development kept more than one checking account. *The American Spectator* has received records indicating there were at least three such accounts, in separate banks. Checks on the Madison Guaranty account, the one with the large overdrafts, were signed by Jim McDougal, although the handwriting belongs to at least two separate people. Tax records are puzzling. One Whitewater resident who owns three lots pays taxes on one of them himself; Ozark Air Services continues to pay the tax bill on the others. Then there is the matter of the large purchase of land from the International Paper Company, consummated by the Whitewater partners months after Governor Clinton backed special legislation giving International Paper a multi-million-dollar tax break. All of these matters need special attention from independent counsel Fiske.

Yet the elaborate research and nitpicking may divert

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attention from a massively obvious question. Just how far was Clinton willing to go for McDougal? One bit of evidence was available to those who kept their eyes open on the pilgrimage south of Flippin to Whitewater. The whole development was made possible because a state agency controlled by Clinton had built a road there.

The access to Whitewater is several miles of a one-lane country road whose rusty asphalt was laid down by the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission. This agency is one of two given autonomy by the Arkansas constitution. (The other is the Highway Commission.)

The two cooperate, say their critics, in their primary business of building roads. As the critics describe it, a developer with lots of raw land along a major river will donate a waterfront parcel to the Game and Fish Commission for a boat ramp. If the commission accepts, it will undertake to build an access road to the ramp, using federal Marine Fuel Tax funds disbursed by the Highway Department. The road incidentally will open the rest of the tract to development, boosting its value ten-fold. This combination of jobs and land value made the Game and Fish and Highway Department axis one of the most powerful in state politics. Clinton, in his first term, in 1979-80, played the game. He appointed two old-line commissioners who promptly fired the independent director of Game and Fish. Somewhere in this time, the access road to Whitewater was approved. In mid-1979, minutes of the commission show it accepted a donation of land near Whitewater Estates. The donation was contingent upon construction of a fishing access ramp at the Ranchette development, near Whitewater Estates. The construction of the Ranchette ramp necessitated the paving of an access road from Highway 101, funded by Marine Fuel Tax funds.

Lawyers and Regulators

It would be bad enough if Clinton used the powers of his office to enhance the value of his real-estate speculation. But it would be a serious scandal if he allowed his position to interfere with enforcement procedures designed to protect the public—in short, if he joined in a fix. This is the question raised by Clinton's friendship with McDougal. In fact, no matter what turns up in Whitewater Estates, the most significant revelation may be the most obvious one, that Clinton was business partner of the owner of a corrupt and failing thrift.

The record already shows that Clinton has a massive blind spot on what constitutes appropriate behavior for a financial regulator, or a governor who appoints the regulators. McDougal himself reported that Clinton solicited Madison Guaranty business for Hillary. In an interview with William Rempel and Douglas Frantz of the *Los Angeles Times*, the former thrift owner said that Clinton showed up at his Little Rock office one morning in late 1984, winded and sweaty from his jog. Clinton plopped down in McDougal's new leather desk chair and started complaining about how hard it was to make ends meet. "I asked him how much he needed, and Clinton said, 'about $2,000 a month,'" McDougal told the *Times*. McDougal said he immediately ordered Hillary's Rose Law Firm to receive a retainer for that amount, although other versions say the payments went directly to Hillary. "I hired Hillary because Bill came in whimpering they needed help," McDougal said. Although McDougal's memory generally loses its edge whenever Clinton is involved, he said the episode stuck in his mind because he kept worrying that Clinton's sweating might damage his new leather chair.

No one denies that Hillary started drawing the $2,000 retainer, although White House press secretary Dee Dee Myers denied that Clinton had anything to do with it. A former member of McDougal's circle says, on the other hand, that Clinton used to pick up the check on his morning jogs.

To understand Hillary and Bill's subsequent role, we have to take a look at McDougal's standing with the regulators. In America's patchwork system, a legacy of Jacksonian distrust of central banking, state-chartered banks and thrifts, such as Madison Guaranty, are controlled primarily by state government. Although the federal government lacks legal authority to close them, it does have tremendous influence through federal deposit insurance funds. The separate funds for banks and savings and loans (a different legal entity) rely on federal examiners to check the condition of their members, and the federal supervisors can generally force a state to shutter an offending state-chartered institution by threatening to cancel its federal deposit insurance. In the mid-eighties, before it went bankrupt, the Federal Savings and Loan Insurance Corporation (FSLIC) backed all thrift deposits. The Federal Home Loan Bank Board (FHLBB), modeled on the Federal Reserve with thirteen regional banks, sent out the examiners.

The federal regulators smelled a rat at Madison Guaranty almost from the beginning. Buried in the files at the Arkansas Securities Commission is a March 1984 memo from the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, which insures banks. The FDIC examiners were watching Madison Bank and Trust, the small bank in Kingston that McDougal bought in 1980. (Under its previous name, Bank of Kingston, it had lent Hillary Clinton $30,000 to build a house at Whitewater.) They were perturbed that the bank, in an apparent effort to hide its weak condition, had begun switching some of its problem loans into McDougal's thrift, Madison Guaranty. The regional director of the FDIC considered it serious enough to draw to the attention of the president of the Home Loan Bank of Dallas.

(One problem loan of $45,000 was drawn to Stephen A. Smith, a political scientist with a polling firm called The Communications Company. Smith had been president of Madison Bank and Trust and moved over to vice chairman of Madison Guaranty. During Clinton's first term as governor, Smith was his administrative assistant.)

The memo sparked a flurry of activity. The thrift examiners scheduled a special examination of Madison Guaranty. The "Special Limited Examination" concluded that "the viability of the institution is jeopardized" and warned that honest bookkeeping would show it was insolvent. The

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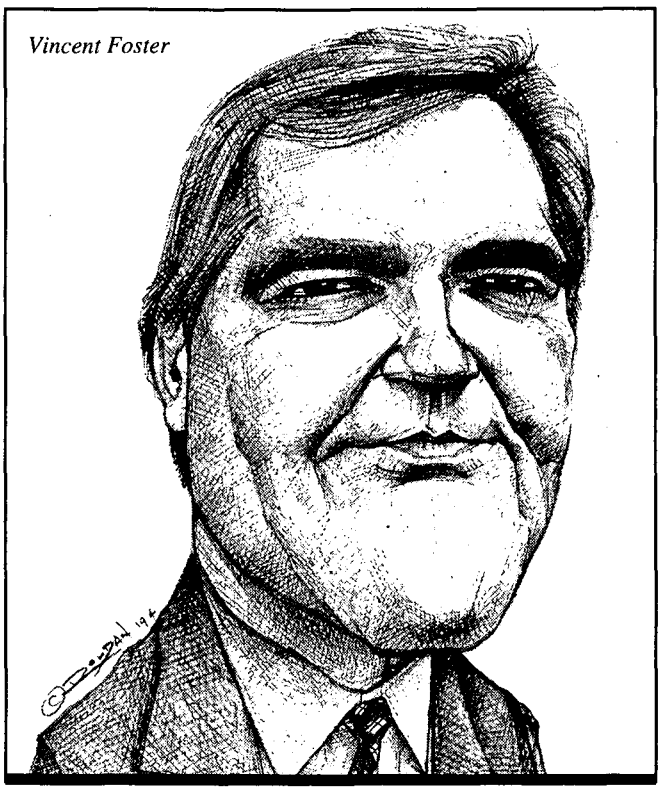
Home Loan Bank summoned Madison's directors to Dallas for a June 21 meeting, and the Arkansas thrift supervisor, Lee Thalheimer, piled on with a letter calling the violations "very serious."

But as often happened with thrift regulation that year, the results fell far short of the concerns. The flurry of activity produced a "supervisory agreement," a relatively mild form of probation. And the examiner-in-charge for the audit, Sarah Worsham, jumped ship, joining Madison Guaranty as a senior officer.

Almost as soon as the ink dried on the supervisory agreement, Madison Guaranty began peppering the state securities commission with requests for approvals of its land deals. But Thalheimer seemed reluctant to act quickly. On June 25, 1984, the thrift's lawyer, John Selig, asked for authorization for the partnership with Freddy Whitener. Selig was a member of now governor Jim Guy Tucker's law firm, Mitchell, Williams, Selig, Jackson & Tucker. Letters came from another member of the firm, Beverly Bassett, whose brother Woody was one of Clinton's campaign finance chairmen. Thalheimer kept asking for more information on that deal and on the Campobello partnership. The correspondence continued well past October. On January 16, 1985, the 32-year-old Beverly Bassett replaced Lee Thalheimer as Arkansas's securities commissioner. On January 22, she signed cover letters mailing out the approvals. But curiously, the formal orders were dated September 15, 1984, and signed by Thalheimer. Were they backdated to save Bassett the embarrassment of signing orders she had drafted as Madison's lawyer? Neither Bassett nor Thalheimer returned calls to explain this anomaly.


Vincent Foster

When Bassett took office, she continued to deal with her former law firm (although her name no longer appeared at the top of the right-hand column on its letterhead). But for heavy-duty work, McDougal turned to the Rose firm, which he was now paying anyway. Although Bassett's former firm was firmly embedded in the Little Rock political family, Rose was big time. Its clients included the largest corporations in the country, let alone Arkansas. But it played a dominant role in the state, too, representing the Arkansas Gazette Company, Wal-Mart, and, above all, Stephens, Inc. The brothers Wilton ("Mr. Witt") and Jackson Stephens owned the largest private brokerage firm outside of Wall Street. As readers of *The American Spectator* already know (see my "Clinton's Bert Lance?" in the October 1992 *TAS*), they were the state's king-makers. Jack had the national fundraising contacts, first as Democrat then as Republican. (The story is he roomed with Jimmy Carter at Annapolis.) Mr. Witt backed Clinton, but died in 1991, just before his biggest investment paid off.

The large brick facade of the Rose firm's downtown headquarters, a former YMCA, housed some of the best lawyers in town. Many of them moved to Washington with Clinton. There was Webb Hubbell, now at Justice, William Kennedy, now assistant White House counsel, Vincent Foster, and Hillary. But the Madison Guaranty account fell largely to a securities-law specialist named Richard N. Massey.

Massey's assignment was to win approval for McDougal's plans to bring fresh money into Madison Guaranty. The net worth of the thrift had always fallen short of the required minimum, even with McDougal's enthusiastic bookkeeping. He decided to boost it by the unprecedented measure in Arkansas of issuing non-voting preferred stock, which would bring him more capital without diluting his control. Professionals at the Arkansas securities department were doubtful. The Rose firm decided to nudge along the process with an unusual letter dated April 30, 1985. Basically a two-page closely reasoned legal document, it ended with a subtle reminder of Hillary Rodham Clinton's involvement. It gave her name as well as Massey's as someone to call "should you require further information or assistance." But the letter was signed simply "Rose Law Firm."

The lead professional at the securities department's savings and loan division, Charles Handley, was unpersuaded. In a handwritten May 5 note, he recommended to Bassett that one of their own attorneys should review the matter and issue a legal opinion. He reminded Bassett that Madison had a capital problem. But the new commissioner went ahead with the approval. She announced her decision in a May 14 letter that could be read as a sly dig at the governor's wife. Although the letter from Rose was pointedly not signed by Mrs. Clinton and in fact bore Massey's secretarial notation, Bassett addressed her reply to "Dear Hillary." Whatever Bassett's subconscious intention, this exchange has become a major embarrassment for the First Lady, as direct documentary evidence of her legal work for McDougal.

But the stock was never issued, and the condition of

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Madison Guaranty grew ever more desperate. Overdrafts were building up, and the Home Loan Bank Board was waking up to the national thrift disaster. A new federal examination was pending in early 1986. This is the point at which, according to one major witness, Bill Clinton jumped personally into the septic tank.

Capital-Management Services, Inc.

If one man broke open the Whitewater scandal, it was David Hale, a soft-spoken 52-year-old political insider. Hale has a highly unusual personality for someone playing the chief accuser in a national scandal. Many of these, from Silas Deane to John Dean, exude a shifty, self-serving, definitely unpalatable character. But if one thing distinguishes Hale, it is a kind of open innocence. Although he currently awaits trial on federal fraud charges, it's hard to imagine him as the mastermind of a criminal conspiracy. But one can easily see him getting in trouble from an eagerness to oblige and be helpful. It was this quality that made him central to the financial problems of the Clinton-Tucker-McDougal circle, and made him their designated fall guy.

Hale's family was close to Arkansas's inner circle, and he entered politics himself when he was 18. He remembers sitting as a youth in a smoke-filled room as ex-Governor Orval Faubus discoursed on his misunderstood political career. As a student at the University of Arkansas, Hale was president of the campus Young Democrats and a member of the executive committee of the National College Young Democrats; he attended John F. Kennedy's inauguration and sat next to Lena Horne at the inaugural ball. In 1974, as a young lawyer in Little Rock, he became president of the national Junior Chamber of Commerce. In 1979 Governor Clinton wanted to introduce a small claims court to Arkansas, and after the requisite legislation was passed Hale was appointed to the Pulaski County Municipal Court to head the small claims court in that county. He talks with great feeling about the satisfaction of giving ordinary citizens a stake in the judicial system.

In 1979, Hale also set up a Small Business Investment Corporation, a private lending company backed by the Small Business Administration. Although designed to give disadvantaged businessmen and women access to credit, his Capital-Management Services, Inc. also fell into the role of McDougal's lender of last resort.

Hale recalls meeting McDougal as a student in Young Democrats, but he became actively involved with him through Jim Guy Tucker, Hale's lawyer at the time who had borrowed from Capital-Management for a local cable company. Hale says Tucker invited him to meet at his law office after work one day. From there, they drove to meet McDougal at Castle Grande, a low-cost residential development that was one of McDougal's Little Rock investments. It was the fall of 1985. McDougal asked a number of questions about Hale's SBIC, particularly about how much it could lend him. Shortly afterward, says Hale, McDougal met with him again and said something like "we're going to need your help." Hale doesn't remember the exact words, but he is sure that McDougal used the phrases "political family" and "clean up." The implication was that Hale had to help clean things up for members of the political family.

Hale wasn't sure what needed cleaning up, but he began to work on a series of loans. One was to help McDougal with the Campobello project. Another went to Stephen Smith, Clinton's former administrative assistant, very likely to repay his outstanding loan at Madison Guaranty. (It was this loan, among others, that had prompted the FDIC to alert the thrift regulators about McDougal.) Hale says it took him into the new year to prepare the paperwork. Around then, McDougal also asked him for $150,000 for Madison, and mentioned that his thrift had a federal examination coming up. Hale says he'd had no indication that the thrift was in trouble.

It was around this time that Hale learned that McDougal's "political family" definitely included Bill Clinton. Hale was waiting for a ride at the state capitol when Clinton came by and asked if he was going to help Jim out. Hale says he met Clinton again in early 1986 but no later than February 28. "Jim McDougal asked if I could meet with the governor at Castle Grande after work," Hale said. "That's where I met him."

When Hale walked in the office, he remembers that Clinton and McDougal were talking about Frank White, the Republican who beat Clinton in 1980 and was contemplating a second run in 1986. After political chit-chat, they turned to McDougal's loan.

"Jim said we'll put it in Susan's advertising company," Hale said. "When we talked about how to structure it, Clinton explained that his name could not show up anywhere. McDougal made the statement that that was all taken care of. What he meant I don't know."

When they talked about security on the loan, Hale says Clinton mentioned that they had an interest in land in Marion County, the location of Whitewater Estates. But Hale wouldn't take it, judging Whitewater's location as too remote. "That's not the end of the world, but you can see it from there," he says. Clinton and McDougal were dressed casually, he says, and he remembers McDougal's dark green Jaguar in the parking lot. His part of the meeting lasted ten to twenty minutes, and he left them still talking.

Later, says Hale, McDougal called him and asked that he increase the $150,000 loan for Susan to $300,000. McDougal denies that Clinton was at any meeting with Hale, and the White House press office says Clinton has no recollection of talking to Hale about a loan. But there is no doubt that Hale wrote a check for $300,000 to "Susan H. McDougal, d/b/a Master Marketing." It was dated April 3, 1986, and deposited without an endorsement, with a stamp saying, "Guaranteed by Madison Guaranty Savings and Loan Little Rock."

Hale vividly recalls his last meeting with Clinton, about ninety days later. It took place by the University Plaza Mall in Little Rock. Clinton saw Hale and came running over. "You could tell he was perturbed or upset," Hale says. "Clinton said, 'Have you heard what that f---ing whore

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Susan has done?' " Hale hadn't heard, and Clinton rushed off without explaining. To this day, Hale says, he doesn't know what Clinton was referring to.

The frantic maneuvering with Hale's loans failed to fool the thrift examiners. The federal audit began on February 28 and produced a scathing report (parts of which were quoted earlier). The FHLBB forced McDougal out of the management and imposed a severe Cease and Desist order. After McDougal had been forced out of Madison, he dropped by Hale's office to try to settle his loan by signing over his stock in the thrift. This offer revealed another anomaly. Researching the thrift stock, Hale discovered that McDougal had already pledged it as collateral, when he originally bought Madison Guaranty. The stock purchase had been funded by a $70,000 loan from the Stephens-controlled Worthen Bank in 1981. His shares also secured a later loan of $142,186 from Worthen. If McDougal defaulted on the loan, which seemed likely, the Stephens empire technically would own Madison Guaranty. (This was the mechanism by which, in the eyes of the Federal Reserve, the infamous BCCI had taken control of Clark Clifford's First American Bankshares.) Hale wrote to Worthen, asking about the status of its lien, but the bank seemed determined to wash its hands of McDougal. He never received a reply.

(Hale learned, much later, that McDougal's purchase of Madison Bank and Trust, the former Bank of Kingston, had been similarly financed by a $390,000 loan from Union National Bank of Little Rock, which in 1993 merged with Worthen Bank. The status of both these loans might be a fruitful inquiry for the special counsel.)

McDougal's stock assignment turned out to be worthless. The former head of the 1984 examination, Sarah Worsham-Hawkins, took over Madison Guaranty. The thrift struggled along until 1989, when the renovated federal savings and loan regulators turned it over to the new chartered Central National Bank.

McDougal himself underwent something of a breakdown that saw him briefly hospitalized; although the problem, he told friends, was later diagnosed as impaired blood flow to the brain. In 1990, he stood trial along with two of Susan's brothers for fraud and misapplying funds in connection with the purchase of a building in the Castle Grande project. His defense lawyers argued, among other things, that his financial midjudgment was a symptom of mental disorder. He was acquitted. It may have been concern about McDougal's mental state, and the deterioration of his marriage to Susan, that prompted Chris Wade to ask Hillary Clinton to seek power of attorney from them in November 1988. She asked for this authority to wrap up Whitewater Development's affairs by the end of the year, but there is no sign that Jim or Susan granted it.

Hale himself found not only that his "clean-up" loans were worthless, but that his knowledge of McDougal's finances would be costly. He says that the defaults on his more than half million in lending to the McDougal circle helped sink his investment company. When the Resolution Trust Corporation, the S&L clean-up agency, started to renew its investigation of Madison Guaranty last year, Hale began to receive disturbing warnings. "You have been selected," he says an unidentified friend told him, meaning that he would be the scapegoat to be sacrificed in the scandal. Hale was indicted on September 23, 1993, on charges of defrauding the Small Business Administration, based on his allegedly misrepresenting a loan to his company as paid-in capital so that he would be eligible for increased financing from the SBA. When his prosecution went on fast track and the Justice Department ignored his offers of information about Arkansas corruption, Hale decided that he was indeed the fall guy and started talking to the press. (His trial was originally scheduled to start on January 28, an extremely rapid pace, and so far Hale has been able to obtain only a month's postponement.)

One coincidence made reporters, at least, highly interested in listening. The suicide of Vincent Foster came on the same day that the FBI issued a search warrant for Hale's office. Shortly after the warrant was issued, Foster's office received an unexplained call from the Rose Law Firm. In addition to items pertinent to the charges against Hale, the search inventory also listed the files for the 1986 "clean-up" loans, including the $300,000 to Susan McDougal's Master Marketing. Independent counsel Robert Fiske acknowledged a possible connection when he announced that his mandate would include an investigation of the suicide.

Campaign Funding

Hale's story does contain a major difficulty. Why would Clinton, who is not known for excessive loyalty to old associates, stick his neck out for McDougal? For a possible explanation, it's worth having another look at those checking account overdrafts.

The limited documentation now available shows the beginnings of a pattern. Some of the most curious transactions take place in Octobers of even-numbered years, that is, just before elections. The pattern starts in 1980, when Clinton lost his first re-election campaign. That October, Hillary received a loan of $30,000 to build a demonstration house at Whitewater. It came from the bank of Kingston, then recently purchased by McDougal and Stephen Smith. But a deposit of $30,000 doesn't show up in the Whitewater Development account at Kingston (Number 0001-040-5) until December 29, 1980. What was the money doing in the meantime? The special counsel might want to ask.

The Whitewater account at Madison Guaranty shows some curious activity in October 1984, which left it with an overdraft of nearly $18,000. But the strangest business comes in the Whitener and Associates checkbook, the Gold Mine Springs account that Freddy Whitener, the road-builder, entrusted to McDougal's agents.

The string of apparently inflated closing costs mentioned earlier started on September 26, 1984, and continued through the middle of October. These are checks for more than $21,000, more than $9,000, and nearly $15,000 for lots

(continued on page 103)

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THE AMERICAN SPECTATOR VOL. 27, No. 2 / FEBRUARY 1994

The New York Times
Book Review

December 14, 1997
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A Clinton Christmas Reader

A potpourri from a fallen administration

By Byron York

As in most holiday publishing seasons, the offerings for Christmas 1997 go heavy on celebrities and romance. Likely best sellers: *Working Class Hero: My Years with Liz*, Larry Fortensky's oddly touching memoir of his marriage to the late movie star; *Warning Seins*, Shoshanna Lonstein's account of her ill-fated affair with comedian Jerry Seinfeld; and *Sayonara Provence*, Peter Mayle's tale of leaving the crowded South of France for life in a small Japanese village.

For serious readers, however, this holiday season offers more substantial treats. No fewer than five books documenting the travails of the recently departed Clinton and Gore Administrations are now on the shelves. Together, they sketch a fascinating portrait of the troubled players in the most

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The Bengals: An NFL Dynasty/7

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star-crossed Presidency since that of Richard Nixon. A reader's guide:

SEASON OF CHANGE

The White House Years.
By Bill Clinton.
Illustrated, 1,635 pp. New York:
Alfred A. Knopf. $45.

It seems impossible to believe that anyone could add to the volumes of newsprint that have analyzed the rise and fall of Bill Clinton. Still, before the publication of this book, many observers had hoped the former President would provide new insights into the scandal that engulfed his administration in 1995. For many Americans, the complex series of financial misdeeds that began with the Whitewater affair (and became known, inevitably, as Whitewatergate) and which led to his resignation in December 1995, remain a mystery.

The former President shows no rancor toward Senator Joseph Biden, whose Senate Judiciary Committee prepared the impeachment action that preceded Mr. Clinton's resignation.

Unfortunately, readers looking for enlightenment will not find it here. The former President's book scarcely mentions the scandal, which started with a series of land deals and campaign contributions in the mid-1980's and resulted in a widespread White House cover-up in the 1990's. His brief chapter on Whitewatergate exists primarily to direct blame away from himself and at nearly every member of his Administration, with the exception of former Attorney General Janet Reno, who attempted to accept responsibility for any wrongdoing.

Instead, Mr. Clinton dwells at length on what is generally believed by policy experts to be his greatest triumph: the establishment, after several false starts, of a stable democracy in Haiti. It was just the first of several unexpected foreign policy accomplishments that earned him high praise abroad even as he sank into one domestic crisis after another.

The book is strongest when it deals with personalities. For example, the former President shows no rancor toward Senator Joseph Biden, whose Senate Judiciary Committee prepared the impeachment action that preceded Mr. Clinton's resignation. And the book's final chapter shares the former president's pain during the 1996 divorce action brought against him by Hillary Rodham Clinton.

ON MY OWN

Life in the White House—and Beyond.
By Hillary Rodham.
Illustrated, 427 pp. New York:
Random House. $35.

Hillary Rodham remains the most intriguing—and perplexing—woman in American public life. The author of the most ambitious social welfare proposal ever made; she retreated from a policy role during Whitewatergate, instead joining several former First Ladies in a nationwide crusade for improved child nutrition. Although implicated as a partner in the real estate deal that led to the crisis, she has so far managed to avoid prosecution by claiming that her remaining papers are protected by the doctrine of executive privilege.

As with the former President's account, readers looking for a glimpse into the real workings of the White House during the Clinton years will be sorely disappointed by the former First Lady's book. She rarely mentions the defeat of her health care plan; instead, Ms. Rodham, now Streisand Professor of Law and Public Policy at Yale Law School, writes movingly of her divorce from the former President and the challenges of beginning a new life.

WAR ROOM, BOARD ROOM

A 1990s Odyssey.
By George Stephanopoulos.
Illustrated, 329 pp. New York:
Simon & Schuster. $25.

It seems hard to remember the days in early 1993 when George Stephanopoulos—the slight, bespectacled Rhodes Scholar—seemed the very essence of a Washington sex symbol. Featured in the motion picture *The War Room*, the object of national fan clubs, he seemed headed for great things. But he became the earliest victim of Whitewatergate and is now facing trial on charges of lying to Congress. Earlier this year, Stephanopoulos was recruited by executive Barry Diller to develop reality programming at QVC/Paramount.

For many readers, the most interesting part of this rather dry account of the Clinton years will be the description of his breakup with actress Jennifer Grey (shortly before she won an Oscar for her performance in the motion picture *Twilight of the Golds*). Stephanopoulos subsequently married actress Marlee Matlin; the couple had a daughter earlier this year. Their announcement that they would raise the girl as if she were deaf—despite her perfect hearing—set off a storm of ridicule and forced Stephanopoulos and Matlin into an exile from which they have only recently emerged. →

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"I Sincerely Believed"

In the end, I suppose my dilemma was no different from the boy who cried wolf: after a while everyone thought I was spinning, even when I spoke from the bottom of my heart.

I think I first began to realize the dimensions of the problem back in 1993, when I read Michael Kelly's profile of me in the *Times* magazine. Such an unflattering cover. Such an unflattering article: "The Game." It made it seem as if I didn't believe anything, when in truth I sincerely believed in what Bill Clinton was trying to do for this country. As time went on, I began to see that I was the victim of a profound cynicism in America, and nothing I could say would change it.

The only solution, as I told President-elect Quayle, was a return to our core values, the ones he had been voicing all along, even when there was a great political price to be paid.

From "Home Again"

IN THE LOOP

My Years with Bill and Hillary Clinton.
By Bernard Nussbaum.
Illustrated, 376 pp. New York:
Basic Books. $29.

Last year, a Federal judge offered former White House counsel Nussbaum immunity from Whitewatergate prosecution on the condition that he reveal the contents of the missing portion of a suicide note left by White House Deputy Counsel Vincent Foster in 1993. At the time, most observers believed that the note's missing text would somehow solve the riddle of Whitewatergate. However, when Nussbaum complied, Judge Webster Hubbell ordered the information sealed for 50 years, leaving scandalmongers—and the general public—stymied. And with no note, this seems hardly worth reading.

HOME AGAIN

A Personal Journey.
By David Gergen.
Illustrated, 216 pp. New York:
Random House. $23.

As 1995 began, most observers believed that Mr. Gergen, a veteran of the Nixon administration, would be invaluable to a chief executive fighting a scandal that threatened his presidency. In retrospect, it seems hardly surprising that Gergen drew scorn from both Democrats and Republicans when—at the precise moment that Whitewatergate began to spin out of control—he announced he was leaving the White House to become president of Walt Disney Company's American history theme park in northern Virginia (a decision that stunned producers of the *MacNeil/Lehrer NewsHour*, who had saved his old spot in hopes Gergen would return). His statement in November, 1996 that he had always considered himself to be a conservative was widely believed to be an effort to ingratiate himself with the right-wing ideologues that President-elect Quayle had placed in charge of the transition team.

• • •

And there will be many more volumes. Jerry Seper, whose reporting on Whitewatergate for the *Washington Times* won a Pulitzer Prize, will publish his account of the scandal, *All the President's Friends*, early next year. Former President Gore has signed a $2 million contract with Simon & Schuster for the story of his one-year presidency. Clinton campaign strategist James Carville is preparing a deeply personal account of his brief marriage to former George Bush strategist Mary Matalin.

The man once known as the health care wizard of the Clinton administration, Ira Magaziner, is writing his side of the bewildering turn of events that led him to denounce Hillary Rodham Clinton and join Rep. Dick Armey's successful effort to defeat the health care reform plan. Now living in Ottawa, where he is helping the Canadian Government reprivatize the country's health care system, his memoir, *Changing Sides*, is scheduled for release next fall. And finally, former Secretary of State Warren Christopher is writing his own volume on the Clinton years—it is said to include Mr. Christopher's account of an alleged incident in which the embattled President asked him to kneel and pray in a White House bedroom at the height of Whitewatergate. ❐

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Baghdad Gasbag

by David Andrew Price

The Gulf War was very good to Peter Arnett. Since January of 1991, when television audiences in the United States and 104 other countries followed his CNN broadcasts from Baghdad, his position in the pantheon of legendary reporters has seemed certain. Although Arnett's reporting there made him a controversial figure in some quarters, it sent his reputation among American journalists soaring. His postwar honors include an Emmy, as well as awards from the *Washington Journalism Review*, the graduate school of journalism at Columbia, the Overseas Press Club, and the National Press Club.

Not that his professional standing needed any help. Long before he went to CNN, Arnett's place in the pantheon was all but assured by the Pulitzer-winning stories he filed from Vietnam for the Associated Press. Bill Monroe, former editor of the *Washington Journalism Review*, hailed him as journalism's "anti-hero hero" and as "our man in Baghdad."

In short, the predominant image of Arnett among his fellow journalists is that of a reporter fiercely committed to the truth, an image that Arnett does not attempt to dispel in his new book, *Live From the Battlefield*.[1] But Arnett's favored image lives on, ironically, only because the American press has failed to heed the imperative for which Arnett is thought to stand: to get out and find the other side of the story. For the European reporters who were in Baghdad with him, a different picture of Peter Arnett emerged.

Like the Alec Guinness character in *Our Man In Havana*, who sent spurious information about Cuba back home to Britain, Arnett sent home reporting that was rendered unreliable by his seemingly uncritical acceptance of the Iraqi government's position. Arnett's apparent suspension of disbelief during his broadcasts—what *New York Times* television critic Walter Goodman described as his lack of "a touch of the skepticism that Washington reporters lay on when talking about American politicians"—could have been made necessary at the time by the constant presence of an Iraqi "minder." If that were the explanation, then one would expect him to fill in the gaps left by Iraqi censorship, now that he is safely beyond its reach.

Yet Arnett has not backpedaled from the reports he filed from Baghdad, and *Live From the Battlefield* continues to present the conclusions of some of his more disputed reports as simple matters of fact. His coverage of the "baby milk factory" bombing is a case in point. He told viewers on January 23 that "an official said it . . . was the only source of infant formula food for children one year and younger in Iraq," and added that the plant was "innocent enough, from what we could see." Gen. Colin Powell maintained that the plant was actually a biological weapons facility with a civilian façade.

Arnett never voiced doubts on the air about the Iraqi story, and nowhere in his book does he concede that he might have been misled about the factory. Not only did he find powdered milk packages at the site, he writes, he found "a full schematic plan of a structure called 'Baby Milk Factory' drawn up by the builders, Sodetag Industries of France." After being grilled about the story by a stateside CNN anchor, he recalls, "I felt that even my own news organization was doubtful of my ability to assess the facts. I worried that political pressure from the U.S. government could undermine what I was doing." Likewise, in a postwar interview with Sam Donaldson, Arnett had asked, "Why would the Iraqi government go to the trouble of doing all this? Was their nuclear weapons plant described—was it disguised as a bagel factory? I mean, why go to the trouble?"

There is evidence, in fact, that the Iraqi government did go to the trouble. Alfonso Rojo, a foreign correspondent for the Madrid daily *El Mundo*, reported in the *Manchester Guardian* shortly after the war that the

[1] Peter Arnett, *Live From the Battlefield: From Vietnam to Baghdad, 35 Years in the World's War Zones*. Simon & Schuster, 463 pages, $23.

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"baby milk factory" was a secret location for nuclear weapons research and development. While the equipment in front was French, the nuclear equipment in the rear—overlooked by Arnett's eagle eyes—was Austrian. According to Rojo's sources, the plant "was set up under the guise of a powdered milk factory to prevent a repetition of the Israeli raid on Iraq's main nuclear facility in 1981." With Rojo's permission, it can now be disclosed that his principal source was the Soviet military attaché in Iraq, Col. Viktor Pazaluk. (Pazaluk has since retired and is living in Moscow.)

An equally curious episode in Arnett's reporting was his handling of the "Gulf Peace Team," a group of seventy-three anti-war activists from fifteen countries. The team set up a camp near the Iraq–Saudi Arabia border in hopes of deterring military action by either side. After the bombing started, Iraq moved the campers to Baghdad. There, on January 30, Arnett interviewed an American member of the team, Anthony Lawrence, who denounced the American war effort at length as an "imperialistic attempt to wrest the oil resources of this region." In *Live From the Battlefield*, Arnett recounts his surprise and chagrin at Lawrence's performance:

> The soft-spoken Washington bureaucrat was transformed on the air to an emotional advocate that all Americans join the peace movement, before the conflict "turns into a holocaust." Though I tried to balance his diatribe with pertinent questions, I got the worst of the exchange.

Duane Stanfield, a Scottish member of the team, remembered the episode a little differently in a letter to the *International Herald Tribune*:

> To represent our views to the world, CNN's Peter Arnett chose an extremist American member of the camp, who proceeded to vilify the U.S. on camera. Later, when I tried to get Mr. Arnett merely to read the policy statement of the camp's sponsoring organization which would have set the record straight—that the Gulf Peace Team's position was nonviolent and nonpartisan—he was not interested. I, for one, am not happy about his journalistic tour de force in Baghdad.

Two days later, on February 1, Arnett reported from the scene of what the Iraqis claimed to be civilian bombing damage. An Iraqi whom Arnett described as "a distraught woman" was shown at the site yelling anti-Western epithets. "We are human beings!" she told the camera in English. "Who made this area like this? The flames in this area, it's the West!"

The woman soon turned out to be a plant—in fact, an aide to Saddam's undersecretary for foreign affairs. CNN, to its credit, broadcast a correction. And although the network officially stood by Arnett throughout the conflict, it appeared to recognize something was askew. CNN repeatedly aired a statement by one of its military analysts, retired air force general Perry Smith, who—as Arnett rightly puts it—"trashed my coverage." In a number of instances, CNN's anchors treated his reporting with ill-concealed skepticism, as his book points out with evident irritation. Anchor Bobbie Battista went so far as to ask on the air whether he was "developing a relationship" with the Iraqi minders.

It was a good question. *Live From the Battlefield* makes no bones about the special relationship that existed between the CNN team in Baghdad and the Iraqi government. Well before CNN was granted its most important privilege—the ability to remain in Iraq while other Western journalists were sent packing—CNN was already receiving and accepting preferential treatment from the Iraqi government. Arnett unapologetically narrates the diplomatic efforts of producer Robert Wiener and himself that brought CNN's privileges about.

The CNN team's preferential treatment was painfully evident to the rest of the Western press corps in Baghdad. With communications facilities scarce and highly sought after, only CNN was allowed exclusive use of its facilities; the other press organizations and independent journalists were required by the Iraqis to share what remained. Both before and after the bombing commenced, CNN zealously upheld its prerogative, always fending off requests for help from other correspondents who needed to have stories sent out.

Yet Arnett did make an exception for one supplicant—the Iraqi government. After the bombing devastated Iraqi communications lines, Iraqi officials asked for and got the use of Arnett's satellite phone to call their embassy in Jordan. (Arnett writes that he let the Iraqis use his phone only to enable them to authorize visas for other American journalists.) A correspondent for the *Sunday Times* of London recalled bitterly that Arnett "wouldn't let anybody other than Iraqi officials use his phone. 'Haven't you ever heard of competition?' I heard him telling other reporters."

There were other privileges. The Iraqis gave CNN alone the use of a communications line from Baghdad to Jordan known as a "four-wire," which Arnett's book describes modestly as "like an international intercom" that "circumvented the hotel switchboard and other standard switching systems." But senior BBC correspondent John Simpson, in his book *From the House of War*,[2] reports that the four-wire also happened to be part of a hardened communications network normally reserved for the Iraqi military—an impressive concession for CNN. Simpson, who was awarded a CBE by the British government for his reporting from Baghdad, argues that CNN's use of the four-wire, combined with the global reach of CNN's broadcasting, gave Iraq the capability to transmit its own signals instantaneously to its embassies and agents, if need be. "Whether CNN knew it or not . . . if Saddam Hussein had launched a widespread campaign of terrorism as he had promised he would, the orders would have been passed along CNN's 'four-wire.'"

But none of CNN's privileges compared with the departure of CNN's rivals by January 19, just days after the bombing began. For Arnett, it could only have been a reporter's dream come true. Arnett has been hazy about the events: In his commencement address the following spring at Harvard Law School, he claimed, weirdly, that the rest of the American press had left in response to pressure from the *American* government, and that he was able to stay because

[2] John Simpson, *From the House of War*. Hutchinson (London), 390 pages, £13.99. Not published in the United States.

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CNN alone had stood up to the White House. In truth, CNN's competitors—roughly thirty people, working for NBC, BBC, ITN, and various other Western organizations—were ordered out by the Iraqis.

Contrary to general belief, however, Peter Arnett was not the only Western reporter in Baghdad after January 19. From the start of the war until the day Arnett left Iraq, he shared the Al-Rashid Hotel with Alfonso Rojo, who had previously covered the conflicts in Nicaragua and El Salvador, the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, and the Iran-Iraq war, among others. To persuade the Iraqi government to let him stay, Rojo had approached Naji al-Hadithi, the director general of the information ministry, and spoke grandly of the historical and cultural ties between Spain and the Arab world. The tactic worked; al-Hadithi permitted Rojo to remain when the others were expelled.

But with Baghdad's telephone links knocked out by the bombing, Rojo desperately needed the use of CNN's satellite connection to transmit his stories. Because Arnett refused, Rojo was reduced to sending handwritten reports by land to the Spanish embassy in Jordan, which faxed them to the newspaper. Arnett's treatment of Rojo had scant logic; the two were not competitors except in the remotest sense. An editorial in *El Mundo* made little effort to hide the paper's disgust, arguing that "Arnett's behavior implied that CNN might have been in connivance with Baghdad."

Worse, Arnett proceeded to make Rojo disappear. In his broadcasts, he created the myth that he was the only Western reporter there. And he duped all of America, including his critics, into believing it. From January onward, Arnett's fabrication was reported as fact by every major newspaper and wire service in the United States. Upon leaving Baghdad, Arnett repeated the claim at a postwar press conference.

In *Live From the Battlefield*, Arnett finally mentions Rojo, but only briefly. Even then, Arnett's account differs from Rojo's; Arnett has Rojo asking to use the phone once, while Rojo contends he tried "many times." Rojo now believes, after much reflection, that "Arnett had the right to deny me the phone." But his forced disappearance is another matter: "The only aspect that was very dirty," according to Rojo, "was his lie about being the only Western correspondent in Baghdad."

Although the details of Arnett's ambitious deceptions were widely reported in Britain, they have never been reported here. In fact, early reaction to his book has been thunderously favorable. The *New York Times Book Review*, for example, ran a front-page review three years to the day after the launching of Desert Storm, commending Arnett for his "fearless insistence on seeing things for himself" and nominating him as "the quintessential war correspondent of our half-century."

Is it that no American reporter knew the truth? Is it that the ones who knew were simply afraid to sound like sore losers? Were they fearful of angering a powerful news organization? Or was it, perhaps, a fraternal reluctance to corroborate the image of a reporter casting aside professionalism in pursuit of fame and the Great Anti-American War Story? ❐

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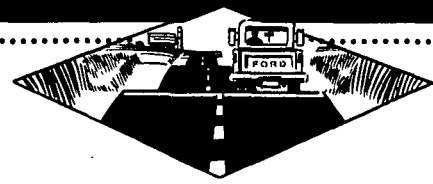

Good Will

by Tim W. Ferguson

"Conservative" is an expansive term—even Garry Wills and Kevin Phillips have been so described. And George Will was, by his own acknowledgment, a Big Government Conservative through much of the 1980s. While he delighted many with his natty and contrary Toryism, he was frustrating and even infuriating to the ranks of Reaganites. His most memorable sentiment: Americans are undertaxed. The true left may never have liked him—he was an anti-Communist, after all—but aside from some sniping over his quiet assistance to candidate Ronald Reagan in prepping for a debate, the parlor liberals of the capital have always thought him proper company.

Remarkably, it has escaped the notice of his hometown press corps that the nation's most influential pundit has turned starkly to the right in the 1990s, or, as he prefers to put it, has a new "edge." In his *Washington Post* editorials, *Newsweek* essays, and weekly appearances on ABC's David Brinkley program, Will is nearly always slashing away at Clinton and congressional liberalism and embracing the passions of movement conservatives, from school choice to term limits. He has apologized, with panache, to some of the supply-side faithful at an Arthur Laffer gathering.

Will traces his "surrender of swords" to two great struggles of the 1980s. The first was economic. "My position when I said we were undertaxed was simply that the revenue code as it existed didn't come close to covering the political appetites we were determined to vote. That's still true. I now, however, believe, partly on the basis of certain things that didn't happen in the eighties, that if the question is, should the government borrow $300 billion or should it tax $300 billion, borrow it. . . . Economists agreed that if you ran $300 billion deficits, you certainly couldn't have declining inflation and declining interest rates. Well, we did and we did. Which does change the context of the argument *a lot.*

"But beyond that, Reagan was right when I believe he said: I hope my tax revenues will be self-financing. A gusher of revenue to government will prevent emergence of the deficit. . . . But if I'm wrong, that's all right, too. Because if you run $200 billion deficits—then a horror and now an aspiration—you shall change the conversation of the country for a generation. And that has happened. I'm not saying it's changed the aspiration of the Democratic Party, but it's changed the way they talk about it, the tactics. They now advance national socialized medicine as a deficit-reduction device."

The other pivotal event was Robert Bork's Supreme Court confirmation debacle, which made Will understand that the culture of the 1960s that he had always detested had taken firm root in the nation's capital. For twenty years, including a stint on Capitol Hill as an aide to a conservative Colorado senator, he had never been alarmed at the fundamental nature of the nation's ruling class. If the sixties mentality was catching in some quarters, "I didn't think it was an insoluble problem." But then came the summer of 1987. "I was struck by the frenzy of the opposition to Bork," he says. "The tendentiousness, the outright lying. I suppose I shouldn't have been."

When I'd first contacted Will, he'd suggested the fight over Bork was what had broken his back. He devoted a section of his book *Suddenly* to his columns from those weeks. Clearly he'd been surprised by how it all turned out; like others, he'd written initially of the jurist's invincible qualifications. Maybe that was what made the result so powerful: surprise at the adversary's power.

But there is also a sincere surprise at the political zealotry of the Bork-haters. "Look," he says, "I'm a happy guy. And I spend a lot of time watching ESPN and being a normal guy. I really have a more relaxed view. . . . Why [was it] so important that people would lie, and act like Stalinists? . . . It didn't matter *that* much."

Will's easygoing disinclination to take politics too seriously may be a key to the equanimity with which he has viewed the state and its gathering force. He admires the elements of democracy that "ennoble" the citizenry, but seems to view the rest as basically just fancy, subject to correction. "Most of what democratic government does is bound to be irrational, because it exists to respond to organized appetites and passions. But most of what it does you can undo, you just have to win the argument next time. Government that exists on the shifting sands of public opinion doesn't have any—or very few—lasting calamities or lasting crimes. That's what makes it fun."

From his academic background, which began with a professor father and proceeded through a Princeton doctorate in politics and a teaching stint, Will had been "taught, rightly, that politics is a great and stately jurisdiction. . . . Coming up through Strauss and political philosophy, rather than Von Mises as the final answer, I was prepared to look for uses for the government, for conservative ends. And I was eager to try and be a Hamiltonian, because this is the country Hamilton made. We talk like Jeffersonians and we build big shiny alabaster monuments to

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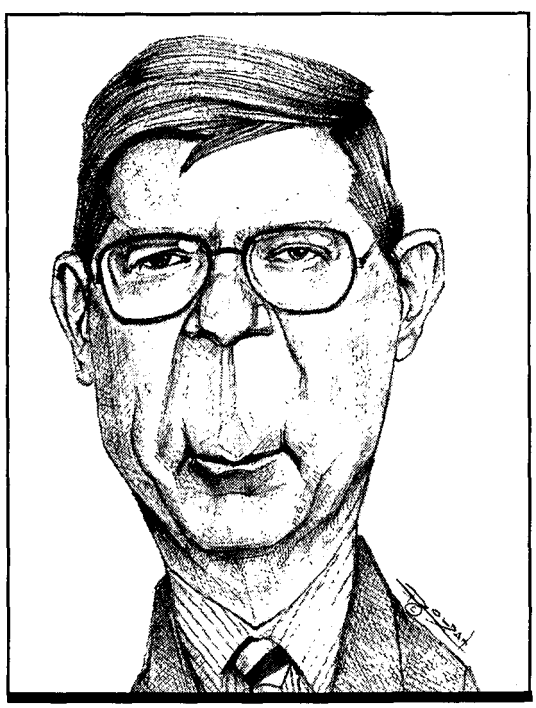
Jefferson but we have a tiny statue of Hamilton [on Washington's Treasury Place]. It's his country! This is the country made by the *Report on Manufactures*." Today, Will is in the Madisonian middle of the Founder spectrum, even "a lot more Jeffersonian than I used to be."

He still rejects the notion of "seeking office in government solely in order to take it down brick by brick." But support for term limits, the centerpiece of his 1992 book *Restoration*, has done the most to unite Will with many of his former detractors. In conversation, Will is more visceral about the "uses that can be made of the modern state by the political class, both the elected political class [and] people who just enjoy bossing other people around. . . . They've been trained from I don't know when, certainly from college on, that their function in life is to regulate other people's lives, spend other people's money because (a) other people aren't very good at it, and (b) they *are* good at it. The way I phrased it in a recent column is that compassion nowadays is 98 percent condescension. I swear, there's a tone of voice: you can hear it in Naderites"—and in "certain conservatives," he hastens to add. As soon as the New Will begins to sound comfortable as a partisan, the Old Will reasserts himself.

"One of the ways conservatives get carried away," he says, is in their singlemindedness. "The proper rate for the capital gains tax is probably zero. But it isn't that important, really." Someone asked Pat Moynihan, who is the liberal he most likes to quote, whether a forthcoming tax tussle would be a "fight to the death." The wise old senator won Will's affirmation with the view that "men die for territory, flag, women, but taxes? Surely not taxes."

From behind a massive partner's desk that he drums in the manner of (dare I say) Rush Limbaugh, the wispy Will recollects his disdain for the true believers of 1980-81. "Long-in-the-tooth Young Republicans who sing songs at conventions," this bunch was. The sort who tried to ride into Washington with Ronald Reagan were "people who enjoy rather too much being a church militant in an unconverted world. They really like being out of power. Theirs is a kind of feckless radicalism."

Will is content to "follow James Q. Wilson, tardily, in all things," one of which would surely be the Harvard-UCLA sage's desire for secular moral authority in areas such as drug abuse. He is thus probably regarded as a "values" conservative, but not so reliably a social one. His writings on abortion have excoriated *Roe* v. *Wade* but sought a legislated middle ground. I asked him what he thought of the significance of feminism to families and the overall culture. Properly understood (as he is wont to say, but didn't), this phenomenon is "the greatest and best change in America in my lifetime," excepting the end of racial segregation. The emancipation of career women "adds to the stress of life, the exertion, but also to the excitement." They may not like hearing that at the Eagle Forum.



The conservative movement is still full of people Will disdains (like Oliver North, to cite one of his least favorites), who worry that each defeat is lasting and each victory fleeting. That lends a certain grimness to the struggle. But there has been, at least until Reagan and for many even in the wake of his "revolution," the sort of bleak horizon that Whittaker Chambers saw in contesting Communism. In the present case, it is dread of being on the losing side of a long march toward decadent socialism (forget the temporary victories at home and abroad).

Although he would concede that some evils are enduring—Communism was one, and Hillary's health plan appears to be another—he gives the appearance of not brooding in his baseball-cap-and-book-lined study over civilization's plight. To a question about who from history might set Washington straight, Will responds, "I'm not sure I'd want to live in a capital, least of all that of a great nation, where some guy walking into town makes a difference. Inertia is a great savior of societies—the fact that they can't be jerked around. Ronald Reagan had the 'revolution.' I didn't vote for a revolution. I voted for a 10 percent change, which is about what he did.

"This is not a crisis. Hitler at the Channel, crisis. Unemployment at 25 percent, crisis. Increasing my taxes to 39 percent, not a crisis. Not a good idea, but not a crisis. If this is a crisis, what's left? I remember when Cronkite came on and referred to the 'catastrophe at Three-Mile Island.' What catastrophe? Zero public health consequences. What resources in the English language are left if that is a catastrophe?

"Bill Clinton is not a crisis."

What, then, was George Bush? For even if Will traces his conversion to events in 1987 or thereabouts, we didn't feel the full force of his guns until they were trained on the "most popular president of modern times." At first it was because Bush did something conservatives liked ("read my lips") as well as things too many of them countenanced (the flag-waving campaign of 1988). But when Bush began his retreat into nothingness near the end of the Gulf War, whew! Principled conservatism has not had a stronger voice than Will's ever since.

So what about Bush? Wasn't his downer of a term, which so preoccupied Will, an inspiration for the highbrow's rebuff of Washington centrism? "Let me get back to you on that," he says, which is of course not what he means. I let it go at that. Maybe this socially acceptable conservative just doesn't want to be the party bore. Or perhaps the sharpened edge is, on that old score, being sheathed in mercy. That, too, would be news, I submit. ❐

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Life With Lionel

by Kenneth S. Lynn

The New York intellectuals of the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s were "overbearing and arrogant, excessively competitive; they lacked magnanimity and often they lacked common courtesy," Diana Trilling recalls in her startling memoir of her marriage to the celebrated literary critic Lionel Trilling.[1] Once at a *Partisan Review* party, she came up behind her husband just in time to block his physically violent response to the critic Alfred Kazin's intolerably insulting demand, "When are you going to dissociate yourself from that wife of yours?" Behind Kazin's rudeness, it would appear, lay a resentment of Mrs. Trilling's arguments about the extent to which cultural Stalinism had dominated supposedly enlightened thinking in America in the years before the Second World War. As her infuriated husband raised his arm to chastise his questioner, she restrained him—"perhaps mistakenly," she adds, for neither old age nor blindness has dimmed the proverbial intransigence of her spirit.

At times, the combativeness of the intellectuals crossed the line into viciousness, as Mrs. Trilling demonstrates in her account of their treatment of Norman Podhoretz and his success-oriented autobiographical volume *Making It*. In the early days of his editorship of *Commentary*, Podhoretz was on the left. Political congeniality, however, did not deter his circle of liberal friends and acquaintances from setting upon him, once *Making It* appeared, like a pack of wild dogs in a Jack London story. *Making It* "was a crudely boastful book," Mrs. Trilling concedes. Yet she leaves no doubt of her distaste for the insensate nature of the assaults on Podhoretz. "From the reviews," she writes, "one might have supposed that he had written *Mein Kampf*."

That Lionel Trilling also distanced himself from the piling on was not merely because Podhoretz had been one of his most brilliant students at Columbia. Not

for nothing had the grace, moderation, and good manners of Professor Trilling become a perennial topic of conversation in Morningside Heights cafeterias. These qualities of his personality and even of his work were noted not only by the colleagues who revered him and the students who turned him into a father figure, but by hostile critics like the poet Delmore Schwartz, who regarded gentility as indicative of a wish to evade the harsher realities of social experience.

In light of this widespread agreement about Trilling's nature, it comes as a shock to find Mrs. Trilling declaring that grace, moderation, and good manners are not the qualities for which her husband would have most wished to be remembered, for they had "little bearing" on his thought and they spoke "not at all" to his essentially tragic view of life. There were "many contradictions" in his character, she insists, even though they may not have been visible in the classroom or in casual social encounters. But they have their place, she implacably concludes, in "our understanding of why he wrote as he did."

Reality was the watchword of his writing and the test by which he measured the intellectual soundness of the life-view that engaged him above all others: the liberal imagination. Whether or not he would ultimately have welcomed the compliment, a good many of his judgments were pioneering expressions of neoconservative criticism. In dealing with the politics of the left, he repeatedly rejected its constructs of the contemporary social world and its dreams of achievable social perfection as denials of the complexity and variousness of life. The first thing we are supposed to understand about Mrs. Trilling's memoir, I believe, is that her husband's willingness to take issue with the left's incorrigible wish for an unconditioned universe began at home, so to speak. Out of painful grapplings with his own complexity and variousness in a context of excruciatingly difficult family relationships, he developed his sense of life as a tragedy. Unfortunately, in Mrs. Trilling's view, he took pains to conceal from his worshipful admirers the human fallibilities that ultimately drove him into psychoanalysis and kept him there for the rest of his days. More royalist than the king, the author of *The Beginning of the Journey* declares on page two that "I am reality-bound," as she sets out to destroy the image of Lionel Trilling as someone immune to profanation.

[1] Diana Trilling, *The Beginning of the Journey: The Marriage of Diana and Lionel Trilling*. Harcourt Brace & Company, 442 pp., $24.95.

Kenneth S. Lynn is the author of Hemingway *and is currently at work on a book on the life and times of Charlie Chaplin.*

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For starters, she tells us that he was "maddened by his father's unreality." As a consequence of Lionel's birth, Dave Trilling had relinquished his tailoring business to become a manufacturer of men's fur-lined coats because he didn't wish his son to have to say that his father was a tailor. Alas, he never again earned a reliable living. In the early days of the Great Depression, Lionel was a lowly college instructor on annual appointment; yet he had to support his parents and his sister, as well as his wife, who was chronically ill. One day, he bought himself a much-needed suit, at Macy's, for $29.95. That night, his father looked it over. "Son," he said at last, "don't you think that a man in your position owes it to himself to have a tailor-made suit?"

Another of Dave's charms was his violent temper. Although it was usually directed at his wife, Lionel grew up in its "savage orbit." At table, the parents communicated through the children. ("Lionel, ask your father if he wants another piece of chicken.") As for Diana's relationship with Dave, she "disliked almost everything about him"—his pieties, his hypochondria, his self-absorption, his trivial conceits, and most of all, his self-pity. Toward the end of his life, she sneeringly reports, he "thought himself surrounded by murderous enemies." (In another heartless sentence, she lets us know that en route by ambulance to the nursing home where he would die, he wept and screamed the whole way.)

Lionel's mother was "strikingly selfish and self-concerned in her rearing of her son, cruelly insensitive to his young pride. In her financial dependence upon us, she was more than selfish, greedy. She made great difficulty for us in the early crucial years of our marriage." Nevertheless, there was much to love and respect in her, in Diana's opinion. But not in Lionel's. Even though he finally managed to acknowledge that she played an important part in encouraging him as a writer, "there remained a hard primitive core of hostility in his relation to her." Were his "unprovoked rages" at Diana circuitously connected to his feelings about his mother? As a veteran of decades and decades of psychoanalysis, the octogenarian memoirist clearly believes that this was so.

In a self-pitying elaboration of her marital woes, she declares that her sensitive-looking husband, whom their close friends thought of as the most peaceable of men and most devoted of husbands, indulged in "annihilating verbal assaults" on her. He accused her of being the worst person he had ever met and of having ruined his life, while she in turn was sure that whenever he fell for no perceptible reason into an extreme bleakness of mood he acted toward her as though she were the cause of all his descents into despondency.

Her own emotional problems surfaced in the summer of 1929. It was the summer of their marriage, and she and Lionel were living in a hilltop cabin in Westport, Connecticut. When for any reason she was left alone, she felt strangely uneasy. Two years later, she experienced her first full-blown panic. As she lay in bed waiting for sleep, she was overwhelmed by terror. Further panics attacked her thereafter with demoralizing frequency, and her fear of being alone entrenched itself. She wanted Lionel to be with her always. Moreover, she wanted him to be more commanding, more in charge of her. "I wanted him," she finally blurts out, "to be more like my father. . . . I wanted him to be the chaperon my father had been." The spring of 1933 was a particularly bad time. Her father had died a few months before, and she was politically bereft as well. For after an enthralling involvement in the Communist movement—to which she and Lionel had been converted two years earlier by the redoubtable Sidney Hook—they had both become disillusioned. Consequently, "I had nothing to fill my days and, like an unhappy adolescent, I stayed in bed half the morning." Lionel's sister, Harriet, would bring her breakfast in bed around nine or ten, and sometimes Lionel would. "I tried to be grateful for his kindness," she writes, "but in my heart I accused him, as I accused Harriet, of invaliding me." Did Lionel, one wonders, sense how she felt, even as he was waiting on her?

Throughout this entire period of psychological crisis, she also was afflicted by physical problems, of which the worst was a severe hyperthyroidism. Following the second of two major operations for this life-threatening condition, she

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steadily regained her strength, but never wholly regained her health. "I have, in fact, never since . . . had a day in which I felt wholly well."

Medical and psychiatric bills massively compounded their financial problems. If it had not been for the money Diana's father left her, "we would have sunk under the weight of our indebtedness." Over the years they constantly borrowed money to stay afloat. Not until 1970—when they were in their mid-sixties!—did they pay off the last of their loans. In part, their own improvidence, especially about expenditures for food, was to blame for their need for deficit financing. They both lacked "good sense," Mrs. Trilling admits, as she recalls the three-rib roasts of beef that they served to friends in the depths of the Depression. Yet she at least was willing to face up to the responsibility of paying bills at the end of the month and verifying bank balances, whereas Lionel took no interest in such matters. And never had, she further states. For when he went to college, his parents had never required him, despite their straitened circumstances, to contribute in any way to the cost of his education.

His financial innocence was symbolic of other disconnections from life. Because he and Diana "were afraid to be fully grown up and to be in command of ourselves and others," they put off having a child (who is all but totally ignored in this memoir) until the twentieth year of their marriage. The prospect of foreign travel—of being removed, that is, from familiar surroundings—likewise filled Lionel with dread. On the trips to Europe that he finally began to make in his forties, he went alone and did next to no sightseeing, preferring instead to visit English literary acquaintances. When in later years he and Diana went together, she had to make all the arrangements, from hotel and restaurant reservations to sightseeing plans. Once, in Venice, she exasperatedly handed him a stack of guidebooks and demanded that he arrange their schedule for the day, only to hear him propose at the end of half an hour that they might visit St. Mark's. Similar attacks of paralysis occurred whenever he dined in a restaurant. Upon being presented with a menu, he would infallibly order something he didn't want.

Trilling lived, in short, in a world of ideas. Yet he wished with all his heart that fate had dealt him a different hand to play. "Any kind of action," Mrs. Trilling writes, "had a special charm for him. War, politics, business, finance: all of these were for Lionel the 'real' world." Bizarrely enough, he "enjoyed" the clamorous student rebellion at Columbia in the late sixties, for as a member of a three-man faculty committee to deal with the emergency, he was on campus around the clock for three days, returning home to sleep for only an hour or two. Here at last was "real" life!

In the most arresting pages of *The Beginning of the Journey*, Mrs. Trilling portrays her husband's acute unhappiness at not being able to break away from academia and make a career as a novelist. She begins by quoting the despairing words he set down in his journal in 1933, at age 28, after his friend Clifton Fadiman had shown him a letter he had received from Ernest Hemingway:

> A crazy letter, written when he was drunk—self-revealing, arrogant, scared, trivial, absurd: yet felt from reading it how right such a man is compared to the "good minds" of my university life—how he will produce and mean something to the world . . . how his life which he could expose without dignity and which is anarchic and "childish" is a better life than anyone I know could live, and right for his job. And how far-far-far I am going from being a writer—and how less and less I have the material and the mind and the will. A few—very few—more years and the chance will be gone.

As a young man who came of age in the high noon of the speakeasy era, 1926, Trilling, too, was "frequently . . . drunk," according to *The Beginning of the Journey*. In his middle years, he had a drinking problem, in the sense that the negligible amounts of alcohol that he consumed were sufficient to alter his behavior in unfortunate ways. But so far as Mrs. Trilling knows, he never wrote a letter to someone while under the influence, certainly not to a stranger, as Fadiman was a stranger to Hemingway. Professor Lionel Trilling, after all, had a reputation for grace, moderation, and good manners to maintain. Only a reader of his journal could have known of the professor's anguished belief that the booze-haunted, arrogant, scared life of the author of *In Our Time* and *The Sun Also Rises* was a "better life than anyone I know could live."

Trilling's obsession with Hemingway surfaced again in his journal on July 3, 1961:

> Death of Ernest Hemingway. Except Lawrence's death 32 years ago, no writer's death has moved me as much—who would suppose how much he haunted me? How much he existed in my mind—as a reproach? He was the only writer of our time I envied. I respected him in his most foolish postures and in his worst work (except *The Old Man and the Sea*).

Trilling's wonderfully endowed mind had led him into a life of intellectual dedication, but "in the dark recesses of his heart where unhappiness was so often his companion," he was "contemptuous" of his achievements, his widow assures us. In 1950, three years after the appearance of Trilling's one and only novel, *The Middle of the Journey*, the *New Yorker* published Lillian Ross's profile of Hemingway's recent visit to New York. It was a pitilessly accurate portrait of a magnificent wreck of a man who talked in pseudo-Indian-chief English in between heroic intakes of champagne and whiskey. "Lionel all but flung the magazine at me," Mrs. Trilling remembers. In a voice that was tense with bitterness he exclaimed, "And you expect *me* to be a novelist!"

In a journal entry of 1949 or thereabouts, Trilling referred to his "continuing sense that wickedness—or is it my notion of courage—is essential for creation." Wickedness versus decency. Dictates of impulse versus calls of conscience. Creative writing versus criticism. Trilling's choices in these matters led to an important life, but left him with a devastating awareness of a lack of inner freedom. Is it any wonder that in some of his most compelling essays he wrote about literary heroes—Huck Finn was one of them and the "dingy little London bookbinder" in Henry James's *The Princess Casamassima* was another—who also were torn apart by the morally critical decisions with which they were faced? ❐

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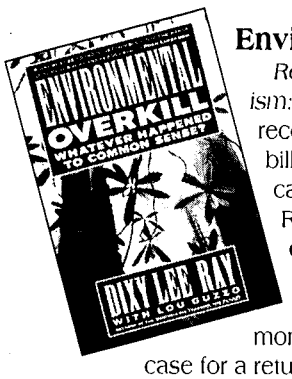

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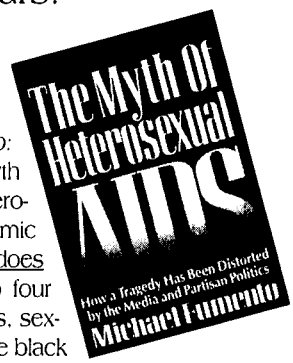

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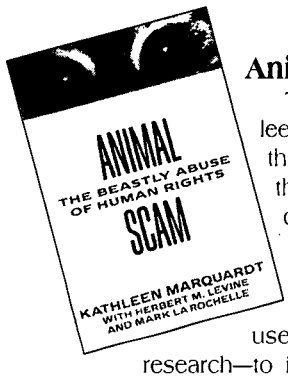

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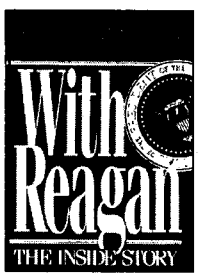

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Trixie

by Benjamin J. Stein

Saturday

A gigantic wrestling match at the gymnasium of the junior high school here in Sandpoint, Idaho. I'm here with little Gorgeous George because his pal, 9-year-old Alex, and Alex's sister Rachel, age 12, are here. Alex is wrestling in a tournament for all of North Idaho, and Tommy is watching fixedly. There are about 500 boys competing, and, as far as I can tell, each and every child has at least two parents and several brothers and sisters. They are from towns I've never heard of in the forests east of Coeur d'Alene, like Post Falls, Rathdrum, and St. Marie's. Also from Priest River, which I have heard of.

The kids are all suited up, trying to look brave, and then hurling themselves at their opponents like mad, wrestling very, very hard for a few minutes, and then stopping.

On the gym floor, there are dozens of mats, and about twelve matches are going on at once. Tommy's been running around with Rachel, keyed up like mad waiting for Alex to wrestle, and I've been noticing a few things.

First, there isn't one yuppie in the crowd. These people look like every one of them could fix a flat tire, change the oil, and skin a mule in the dark. They also look extremely calm. There is a certain concern about the kids, but basically these are calm faces.

There's also no fear in the room. No one is afraid that if his son wins a match, the other boy's homies are going to be waiting for him outside with a gun. Also, I notice that when boys lose their matches, they often cry, at least at the younger ages. They were obviously not hurt physically, but they cry perhaps to ward off imagined criticism. It's like my wife Alex's observation that kids cry when their mothers are volunteering at school, but not otherwise. Crying is largely a tool to manipulate others, not to express sorrow. That's my theory, anyway.

But the main thing I notice is that even I, a novice at wrestling, can tell who's going to win each match just by the looks on the kids' faces. The tough, mean-looking ones almost always beat the ones with any trace of sensitivity. It's amazing how predictive that is. On the other hand, the sensitive-looking ones can become editors and lawyers and doctors—then we'll see who wins the matches.

After lunch, little Hulk Hogan and I set out to find Priest Lake, supposedly a beautiful town forty miles north of the now legendary Priest River north and east of Sandpoint.

Frankly, I'm excited. I want to see this new, large lake. As Tommy and I hurtled along the road, a cold wind began to whip through the trees. We passed a steaming, hissing sawmill at Laclede, and then saw snow flurries when we got near Priest River, on the powerful Pend Oreille River. Hmmm.

Tommy began to ask me questions. How do atom bombs work? How do hydrogen bombs work? What is energy? What is mass? I answered them as best I could, as we roared north toward Coolin, a town just south of Priest Lake.

Now there was not only a good-sized flurry, but also a fog. With the fog, the flurry, and the big trees, the sun was largely blocked. I could see that the road, a two-lane blacktop, was getting very shiny. Tommy began to sing songs from "Ren and Stimpy," our absolutely favorite cartoon, about a dog and cat who live together in a trailer.

We passed by a beautiful ruined barn in a meadow with snow flurries and fog around it. I stopped the car to take pictures. "Daddy, I want to look, too," little Ansel Adams said. We stood by the side of the road and watched the beauty of North Idaho, with nary a human in sight.

Out of nowhere, a battered red pickup came up from the south. A grizzled-looking driver with two mutts slowed down, looked at us, and drove on a hundred yards. Then he slowly backed up and headed towards us.

Oh, boy, I thought. This is it. I'm dead meat. This man is a scout from The Aryan Resistance and he's seen me intruding on their Magic Kingdom and now he's going to kill me. I'd better hide my son.

The man instead rolled down his window, smiled a snaggle-toothed grin, and asked, "Are you all right? You need any help with your car?"

"I'm fine," I said. "Thank you very, very much for asking. I really appreciate it."

"Take care," he said with a wave of his callused hand, and then moved on down the road.

So much for my crazed fantasies. We got back into the car and headed north, ever north, towards Coolin. Suddenly, as we entered a downhill curve, the car swerved out of control toward a ditch. Then it got back under control, and then swerved again. We were on ice. I was scared.

Not only that, but it was almost dark, virtually instantaneously. Little Fearless, however, was not at all fazed. He asked me how a jet engine worked, how a car worked, and why a submarine didn't sink.

While answering, I decided to turn around without seeing Coolin. I wanted to get back to The Edgewater Inn, and fast. I wanted to be somewhere warm and safe. I didn't want to skid into a ditch on Highway 30 to Coolin.

On the way back, we kept slipping ever so slightly on the road. I slowed down to a crawl, but we still were skidding. I was very scared.

Benjamin J. Stein is a writer, actor, economist, and lawyer living in Malibu, California.

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As if sensing my mood, Little Freud said to me, "Daddy, let's sing 'Ren and Stimpy' songs." And so we began, with Tommy, who knew all the words, serving as choirmaster: "On the first day of Yaksmas, Cousin Sven he sent to me, a nose goblin stuck to a chair. On the second day of Yaksmas, Cousin Sven he sent to me, two jars of spit, and a nose goblin stuck to a chair. On the third day of Yaksmas, Cousin Sven he sent to me, three used bandages, two jars of spit, and a nose goblin stuck to a chair . . ."

"No, Daddy," Tommy said. "I'm Stimpy and you're Ren, so you sing this part and I sing the next part."

"Okay," I agreed, and we sang that song over and over again, disgusting lyrics and all, until we got to Priest River, where the highway was dry, and we raced through the night back to town.

Monday

Trixie, Trixie, Trixie. I did a very short radio commercial this morning, and then went to hold Trixie. She's so pitifully sick that it breaks my heart to look at her. She's largely blind, totally unable to stand, virtually deaf, and prey to a host of infections that attack her because she's on so much cortisone. Oh, Trixie. When I pick her up and hold her, she's just skin and bones. But some infinitely familiar something still seeps from her fur into my fingers. Oh, Trixie, Trixie, Trixie.

I lay down in bed with her and held her paw. We both fell asleep and I dreamed that we were on Capitol Hill. She was young and vigorous. Two scary boys approached us. Trixie growled at them and they ran away. Trixie ran in circles around them until they were gone, then she came back to me and licked my hand.

When I awoke, Trixie was drooling onto my shirt.

Oh, Trixie, who will soon be in heaven.

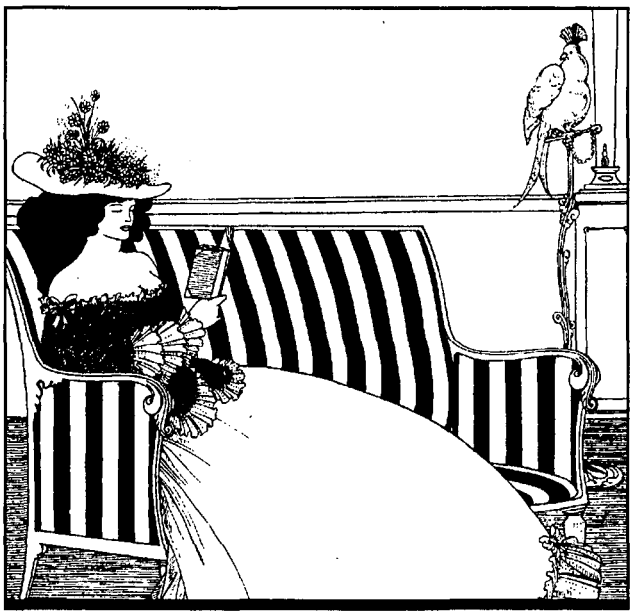
Tuesday

A really typical L.A. day. I was asked a few days ago to go to Michael Milken's "class" at UCLA and write about it for *Los Angeles* magazine. UCLA readily agreed for me to come. Then, when Milken found out I was coming, he said that there couldn't be any more visitors because it would disturb him. Amazingly, UCLA acceded to his wish. Now I see in the newspapers that he's actually invited Garry Trudeau, who's been making fun of him in *Doonesbury*, to come to the class.

After lunch, a visit from a woman in my building. She was deeply upset that the older man who had been keeping her had cut off the flow of funds. "He's just jealous that I've been dating a friend of his," she said. "Didn't he know it was just business?"

"Didn't it bother you, Dotty, that you were basically being a prostitute?" I asked.

"Hell, no," she said. "The money was great. Now, I have to get a job, plus the state of California is going to be on my case because I've been getting disability payments and someone told them that I've been working out all day in Gold's Gym. Some rat. Now I might have to pay back that money and I've spent it."



Dinner tonight with my Russian immigrant pal Akiva, who's selling shares over the phone in a potash business in Chile that doesn't even exist. "You're a smart guy," he said. "Yale degree, all that stuff. Why can't we two guys think of a way to scam this whole town?"

"I don't want to scam this town," I said. "I want to drive around the Okanagan Valley in Canada with Little Perfect."

He looked around Morton's at Steve Tisch. "That guy's gonna inherit billions," he said. "What are you going to do about it?"

"Nothing," I said. "Spend time with Trixie before she dies."

Akiva went on as if he hadn't heard a word. "Your pal Barron sells airplanes," he said. He looked viciously towards Ron Perelman. "He thinks that's hard. I'm selling air," he said. "Not airplanes. Air. You know how hard that is to do? But I do it and I make a good living at it. With my selling skills, and what you know about finance, we should be able to do a scam that takes apart this whole town."

I ate my roast beef and listened to Akiva go on.

When I got back to Little P., he was asleep. I sat in the dark with him for a long time. I watched the fish in his aquarium swimming around their pink castle.

What would a society be like in which there were an official religion that worshipped money? Probably a lot like what we have right here and now in Los Angeles. Oh, my boy, we were so happy when I was scared and you sang to me about your cartoon world.

As I thought that, Tommy opened his eyes and looked at me and said, in his sleep, "Daddy, when can I meet Ren and Stimpy?"

Saturday

My sister, Rachel the Writer, has a number of witty aperçus. One of them is that she doesn't feel bad that she has so many rich friends. She figures that if she's always around rich people, she must be rich, too.

On that theory, I'm in my rented Ford, on Interstate 66, heading west from Foggy Bottom towards The Plains, Virginia, a major hunt club area about forty-five miles from D.C. I've decided to buy a suitable property for me and my fantasies. I've chosen The Plains because a friend lives there, and also because it's where my close personal friend Jack and his wife Jackie were building a house in 1963 before he was murdered by the KGB in Dallas, Texas. (A point brilliantly made by Edward Jay Epstein in a book entitled *Legend*, the only book about the assassination that makes any sense:

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Khrushchev was humiliated about being faced down in Cuba. So was Castro. Together, through the KGB, they arranged to get Kennedy. Then, when the rest of the Politburo found out about it a year or so later, they were horrified by Khrushchev's recklessness and so they forced him out of power. I'm telling you, it makes sense. It does. Really.)

Anyway, I'm on my way here to the Hunt Country, and what do I spy out of my car window but a sign for the Manassas Battlefield Memorial Park. I pulled off, and there was sprawling hilly country, statuary, a modest visitor center, and a few tourists. This was where one of the major battles of all time was fought, and hardly anyone's here.

It's fabulous here. You can feel the wind. You can imagine the fighting. And on one little knob, very near a grove of pines or oaks, there's a small battery and a plaque. The plaque says that something amazing happened here in 1861. The Union forces were winning the battle, see, and then the forces of Stonewall Jackson came out of the trees, withstood the Union assault, and then turned the battle around.

But . . . that little battery was in a position to deliver a devastating volley against Stonewall and his men and keep them *hors de combat*, so to speak. The commanding officer, though, had poor vision and thought Jackson's men were on the Union side and refused to fire. That decision, *tout seule*, changed history. Because the Union lost that battle, the South was emboldened to think it could win the war. The war dragged on for four horrible years. Half a million died. Centuries-long bitterness was created. If that officer had fired, the South might have reconciled and the war might have been over.

I have always loathed Abraham Lincoln. He did not need to fight the Civil War. Slavery was doomed anyway, and obviously would have been illegal soon. And then all of that horrible loss of life would have never happened. The slaves would not have been touched by all of that blood, could have gone on with their lives, and that would have been that. A college teacher of mine used to say that Lincoln did not care about death, and was he ever right.

Anyway, on to The Plains. I drove along Interstate 66 and looked at the rolling hills, the magnificent horsies, the houses, the bucolic scene, and then came to Middleburg. I walked its cute streets, picked out my house in a real estate office, and then drove back.

I kept thinking about the last words that John Brown said as he was about to be hanged in Harper's Ferry for inciting a slave rebellion. He looked out at the Virginia countryside and said, "This is beautiful country." Then he was hanged, but on the other hand he didn't have a mortgage.

Saturday

Trixie. Trixie Stein. Trixie-rama. Miss Trix. Mrs. Trixie Stein. Lover dog. I once read that the North American Indians had over fifty words for horse because horses were both indispensable and beloved beyond any other creatures. I had, for the same

reasons, about a dozen names for my German short-haired pointer who died this morning.

There's a defining moment in every relationship. In Trixie's and mine, it came about two years ago, in the basement of my house in the unfashionable northern end of Malibu. My house is up a narrow canyon, about forty miles from Hollywood. On the day that Trixie made into the Platonic dog-man day, rain had been falling hard for about a week. The Pacific Coast Highway was closed both north and south of my canyon. The canyon itself was closed above me. In a word, I was trapped. The power went out at about five in the afternoon and the phones went right after that.

My roof was dripping in my bedroom upstairs, in the kitchen, the living room, and the guest bedroom. Mail had come earlier in the day. It told me that I was being audited by the federal government, which could not believe that anyone with so small an income as mine could have spent so much on meals and entertainment.

I had quarreled with my estranged wife, and my father had told me that he was not feeling well, a worrisome communiqué when your father is 75.

It had been a difficult day. By battery-powered flashlight, I read the latest alumni magazine from my law school. One of my classmates was an incredibly famous, controversial professor at Harvard Law School, the toast of Cambridge. Another was being named head of Tenneco. Several others were partners at huge law firms. I was trying to figure out if my house was about to slide down the hill into the Pacific Ocean, taking me and my troubles with it.

I made a fire in the basement fireplace, got into a small bed in front of it, and said, "Trixie, come here." My glorious white-and-brown-haired angel sprang effortlessly onto the bed, turned in circles a few times, and then lay down next to me. I could feel her warm, fuzzy fur next to me, feel the perfect rhythm of her breathing, and I felt as if I were in paradise. I was connected with some force of peace so strong that it simply took me out of the dismal moment into a realm of pure security. To paraphrase Bob Dylan, we both could have died there and then.

Trixie, by herself, could throw that mantle of peace over me. "Love surrounded by the halo of eternity . . ." The yearning of the soul for the realm of the divine.

That was the defining moment, as I say. A friend who's a psychologist likes to say that the test of a relationship is whether you actually feel happy when you're with the other. By that standard, Trixie was, again, perfection.

I had Trixie for about eleven years. My wife and I got her to make up for the loss of a beloved Weimaraner, Mary Margaret, and to keep company with a new, far more neurotic Weimaraner, Martha. We shared Trixie, not knowing which of us, wife or hubby, really owned her, until one day Trixie bit my wife so badly that wife wound up in

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hospital for a week and I wound up at home alone with Trixie.

From that point Trixie was officially my dog. As our housekeeper used to say in hushed tones, "Trixie's Mister's favorite."

Trixie was a devoted mistress. She came with me to my office when I wrote. She came with me and waited in the car when I had auditions. When I was a recurring character on "The Wonder Years" for three years, she would often come and wait for me in my dressing room.

There was no such thing as being lonely with Trixie. There was no such thing as hearing about other men from Trixie, no such thing as having her order expensive champagne just to shock me. Trixie never took advantage, never made me feel used or abused, never left me with a bad feeling about who I was. When I was with Trixie, I was where I was supposed to be, not demeaning myself or anyone else.

There was also no such thing as feeling scared. Even far out in Malibu, far from the Sheriff, far from anything but a Chevron station, even writing criticism of powerful financial figures, I never felt afraid with Trixie by my side. When the Federal Express man came, or the plumber or the electrician, she stood between me and the visitor and often gave him a warning nip, just to get the idea across that Benjy was a made guy in dog circles.

Trixie and I had conversations. I would say, "Trixie, you fool, don't you know you're my lover dog and that no man but me can ever love you?" She would respond by wagging her tail and offering me her paw. I would say, "You beautiful angel, come here and kiss me," and she would kiss me with her big wet dog tongue.

She would say she was hungry or she was tired or she needed to go out or she was lonely. True, this was not a particularly detailed conversation, but I also never had to hear Trixie tell me why she didn't like my tie or why she thought George Bush would win a second term or why the riots in Los Angeles were justified or why she liked Hillary Clinton. In fact, I never heard anything, by word, look, or gesture, from Trixie that wasn't the truth.

Every day, we considered whether it was time to —— "When I was a lad, and Shep was a pup . . ." played over and over in my head. "I just couldn't do it," sang young Elvis about putting down his old dog. "I wanted to run. I wished they would shoot me instead." By yesterday she was clearly in extremis in several different ways. Still, when I picked her up to bathe her, she felt like Trixie, warm and fuzzy and soft and reassuring. "I wish they would shoot me instead . . ." This morning, we loaded Trixie into the car, carrying her on her bed, wrapped in a blanket, and took her to Dr. Dogra on Laurel Canyon Boulevard. In the examining room, she did not even look afraid. "This is a moment I have been dreading," said Dr. Dogra. I hugged my Trixie and kissed her paws. Alex and I cried.

"There is nothing more we can do," Dr. Dogra said.

"Good-bye, my Trix," I said as she fell asleep from the barbiturates. "Good-bye. I'll never stop thinking about you." I hugged her once more and could still feel that perfect Trixie feel coming from her fur and her paws, and then out into the smoggy morning and good-bye.

Good-bye and good-bye and good-bye, and hello to a much lonelier life without my Trix. ❐

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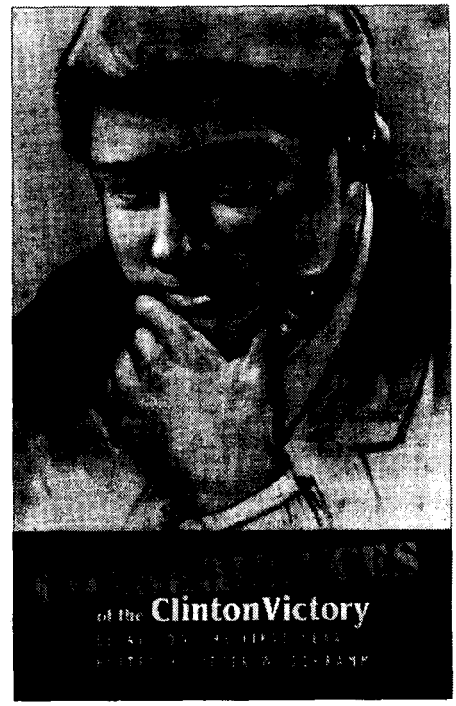
—William Kristol
Chairman of the Project for the Republican Future



Paperback, 198 pages
Price $12.00 plus $2.50 ea. S & H
ISBN 1-878802-18-6

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Ashbrook Press
Ashland, Ohio

Ashbrook Press—*publishers for:*
John M. Ashbrook Center for Public Affairs
Ashland University, Ashland, Ohio 44805
(419) 289-5411 · FAX (419) 289-5425

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I.C. Waters

by Terry Eastland

More than a year has passed during which the nation has survived without an independent counsel law. That blessed respite soon will end. On November 18 the Senate voted to approve legislation that would restore to the U.S. Code the I.C. statute, which lapsed on December 15, 1992. The House should soon follow suit, and the president, whose own financial dealings are now being investigated by a special counsel (a cousin of the statutory independent counsel), will sign the bill into law. Whereupon it could be the Clinton administration's fate to endure an independent counsel experience or two or three—or more. But before I gaze into that crystal ball, some matters involving the still-in-progress resurrection of the independent counsel law deserve notice.

A good place to start is with Republican hypocrisy. The independent counsel statute, originally enacted in 1978 as the special prosecutor law, is a product of Watergate (the firing of Special Prosecutor Archibald Cox being the proximate cause) and has been used mainly against Republican executives, as a Democrat (Jimmy Carter) held the White House during just three years of the statute's fourteen-year existence. Twice (in 1982 and 1987) Congress voted to reauthorize the law, and both times more Republicans than Democrats opposed it, typically invoking high principle. In 1992 Congressional Republicans fought to make sure the law, scheduled by its own terms to expire that December, was not re-enacted, again arguing from principle. On September 23, 1992, some twenty-eight GOP Senators, in fact, declared in a letter to President Bush that the law was "contentious" and "ill-advised," and expressed their "vehement opposition" to it. Nine of those senators, however, voted *for* the law on November 18, 1993. Their names: Bond, Chafee, Coats, Domenici, Gorton, Hatch, Nickles, Simpson, and Thurmond. How, except for the change of guard at the White House, had such an "ill-advised" law become okay?

In a spirit of bipartisanship, one must not forget Democratic hypocrisy. While no Senate Democrats who previously supported independent counsel legislation changed their position, the House Democratic leadership—big advocates of I.C. legislation and investigations in years past—have been notably slow to press for action on an I.C. measure approved by the House Judiciary Committee last *March*. House Speaker Tom Foley's spokesman told me last fall that the leadership would seek a vote before the end of the session. This still seemed likely when the Senate voted on November 18. Scott Celley, an aide to GOP Sen. John McCain, says, "There was a crush to get this done. The underlying assumption was that the bill would move through the House in four or five days and get to the president's desk immediately." Doubtless that would have happened—had Bush still been president. Is it too cynical to think that once-anti-executive House Democrats wanted to cut their ethics-troubled president a little slack?

What neither Democrats nor many Republicans in Congress want is an independent counsel system for their branch of the government, and the Senate's floor debate showcased congressional attachment to this double standard. Here some basic information on the law is in order. Both as written in years past and now proposed by the Senate, the statute establishes a special process for handling criminal charges made against several dozen high-ranking executive officers, known as "covered" persons, including the president and the vice president. It works this way: There is a specific charge that a "covered" person has violated a federal criminal law, and the charge is a credible one. The attorney general investigates the allegation. If he can't end the inquiry within ninety days, it must be passed to a special division of the federal court of appeals in the District of Columbia, which then appoints an independent counsel. It is also possible for an independent counsel to be named to handle cases in which an investigation of a "non-covered" individual might result in a conflict of interest. The attorney general has no influence over the court's selection of counsel. And whoever is appointed is empowered as no other federal prosecutor. While there have been proper independent counsels, there has also been Lawrence Walsh, who spent seven years and between $40 and $100 million investigating Iran-Contra, bringing dubious cases in courts of law, and, even today, trying others inappropriately in the court of public opinion.

Walsh's prosecutorial excesses constituted the strongest practical objection against a new independent counsel law, and indeed the Senate bill would include cost-control and other "lessons-of-Walsh" provisions. But sixty-seven senators rejected an amendment, offered by McCain, that would have "covered" members of Congress.

Opponents of the McCain amendment

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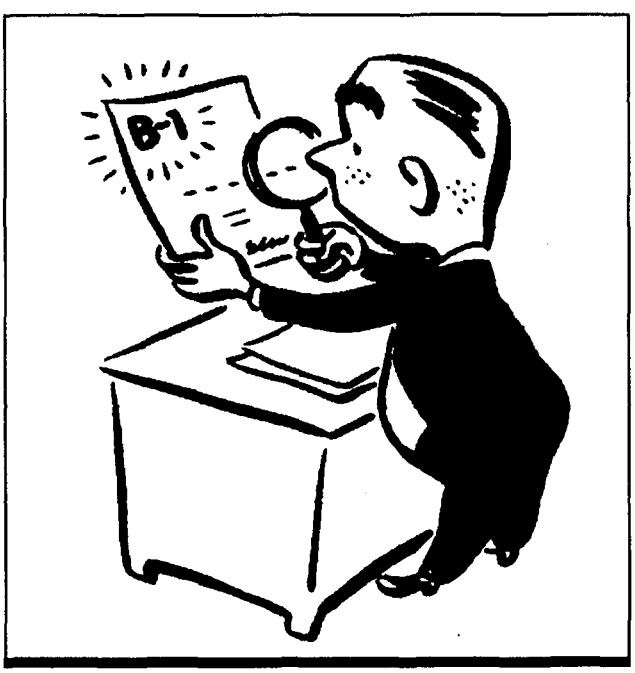
tried to justify the double standard by contending that the executive has at least a potential conflict of interest when it investigates one of its own, but not when it investigates a member of Congress. But because any president might need a 50th vote in the Senate or a 218th in the House, the potential for a political conflict of interest is glaring. Opponents also said that mandatory coverage for members of Congress would result in (as the committee report put it) "an increase in the number and expense of independent counsel proceedings." They were right, but it is surely the political and financial costs of mandatory coverage that are most alarming to members. As McCain said during the floor debate: "Some in this body want a separate, lesser standard for Congress."

The debate on the McCain amendment also produced some fatuous constitutional argument, courtesy of Republican William Cohen of Maine, Senate cosponsor of every piece of independent counsel legislation since the original law was passed. Mandatory coverage of members of Congress, he said, "runs very near, if not over, the line of the separation-of-powers clause." Of course, there is no such clause in the Constitution, but Cohen mentioned it more than once, and obviously he thinks mandatory coverage for Congress presents a serious separation-of-powers problem. Seeking clarification, I phoned his office and was told: "His basic point is that it would be unconstitutional for Congress to restrict the authority of the attorney general to investigate and prosecute any member of another branch of government."

For Cohen, apparently, it's constitutionally okay for Congress to restrict the authority of the executive to investigate itself, but not to restrict its authority to investigate Congress. McCain had it right when he answered Cohen this way: "If using the independent counsel to investigate the Congress creates a separation of powers conflict, then it does so equally in the underlying legislation." It's hard to see how the Supreme Court—which sustained the I.C. statute against a separation-of-powers challenge in *Morrison* v. *Olson* (1988)—could agree with Cohen. On the other hand, it would be interesting to see this great advocate of the independent counsel law file a brief in the Supreme Court claiming it is unconstitutional.

Since McCain's amendment did not pass, that won't happen. Nor, once the new law is on the books, is there likely to be any litigation over its constitutionality. No—the story will then concern the law's enforcement against members of the Clinton administration.

Consider what Clinton and his subordinates have missed by not having an I.C. statute in force. Commerce Secretary Ron Brown surely must go to bed every night grateful for the law's absence. Because he would have been a "covered" person against whom there had been a specific, credible charge (that he solicited $700,000 to lobby on behalf of Vietnam) requiring extended investigation, Brown unquestionably would have experienced the special labors of some independent counsel, and Clinton himself would have been forced to decide whether to ask Brown to resign or take administrative leave. A reasonable argument can be made that independent counsels might have been ordered up for aspects of "Travelgate" and the alleged privacy-act violations by Clinton's State Department. Not to mention the Madison/Whitewater investigation.



Speaking of which, in mid-January, Attorney General Reno grudgingly agreed to Clinton's request that she name a special counsel. As in the Brown case, Reno had steadfastly refused to do what—I.C. law or no I.C. law—is within the power of any attorney general, namely, to appoint a private attorney as a "special counsel" to take over the investigation. This position was represented to the public in terms of principle: Even if you appoint an outside lawyer, said her spokesman Carl Stern, you'll still be assailed over whom you picked and how you went about it—you'll still be accused of a conflict of interest. So long as there is not an independent counsel law, said Stern before Reno's about-face in the Madison/Whitewater case, the attorney general will not export exceptional cases to outside lawyers.

Instead, she will keep them within the main Justice Department, with career attorneys handling them and reporting to her. Until Clinton asked her to change course in his own case, Reno was the first attorney general since well before Watergate to insist that exceptional cases—investigations of top executive officers or investigations of others that might result in conflicts of interest—be handled within main Justice, and not by a special counsel chosen by the attorney general, or even a U.S. attorney. Reno's position will change once the I.C. legislation is signed by the president.

Will she use it? There is every reason to think she will. She testified in the House in favor of the legislation; no previous attorney general has been so outspokenly supportive of the independent-counsel concept, and it seems likely that she would have invoked the law in both the Brown and the Madison/Whitewater cases.

If Janet Reno remains attorney general for the next three years, I wouldn't bet against a few press conferences in which we hear the attorney general declare that the law compels her ("I must do my duty to the American people") to seek the appointment of an independent counsel to investigate administration figures. ❐

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Roman Scandals

by John Corry

John Cardinal O'Connor has not spoken to a reporter since last summer, and does not plan to speak to one soon. The archdiocese of New York has made no announcement on the subject, but it does say off the record that the Cardinal now stays away from journalists. It is just as well that he does. The Catholic church and the press are not getting along. The moral teachings of the one are inimical to the social and political values of the other. Warfare is breaking out along the fault line. At the recent conference of Catholic bishops in Washington, Archbishop William Keeler of Baltimore said in the opening speech that the media's presentation of the church amounted to "caricature." The other bishops rose from their chairs and applauded.

The archbishop was exercised in particular by the coverage of the Pope's visit to Denver last summer. The television pictures were fine, but the commentary was uniformly awful. As Archbishop Keeler said, "In much of the media, there is a pre-programmed Catholic story." The story, buttressed by spurious polls, says the church is in disarray, rife with dissent, and rent by feuding. Keeler named no names, but he might have had a story on CBS's "Sunday Morning" in mind as an example. Although hundreds of thousands of young Catholics had gathered in Denver to welcome the Pope, "Sunday Morning" could find almost no one who seemed to like him. In one report, it used thirteen soundbites from Catholics who disagreed with John Paul's theology, and only two that were in agreement. Both were from the Archbishop of Denver.

Thus the media caricature: Most Catholics are unhappy with their church. The most frequently cited poll—commissioned by CNN and *USA Today*—seemed to uphold the perception. It found that a majority of American Catholics disagreed with Catholic doctrine on abortion and the so-called moral issues. The poll, however, included a great many people who were Catholics in name only, and seldom, if ever, went to church. A *Newsweek* poll, not often mentioned, found that *practicing* Catholics agreed with the Pope: 62 percent supported the church's stand on abortion; 63 percent accepted its teachings on sexuality; 57 percent agreed with its position on the status of women. It should also be noted that some Catholics who disagreed with church doctrine on these matters did so because they thought church doctrine "too liberal."

Little of this nuance is reflected in the media, especially in the analysis heard on television. ("Some say," "Sunday Morning" reported, "the real miracle is the American Catholic Church itself: still intact, yet still at odds with the man from Vatican City.") In fact, Catholics are not at odds with their church so much as the press is at odds with Catholicism. The media recognize sin only in its collective and most political forms: racism or sexism, say, or homophobia. We all seem to be guilty one way or another. Catholicism and the sterner forms of Protestantism, though, insist that sin is an individual affair. Blaming society or calling for new legislation is not enough. You must answer to God, and shoulder the guilt yourself.

There is nothing abstract about Catholic thinking on this. Sin is quite specific. You do wrong if you have an abortion, commit a homosexual act, or practice adulterous behavior. Catholicism can be burdensome. The media, however, do not think of abortion, homosexuality, or adultery as being sinful or even particularly blameworthy. Indeed, abortion rights and gay rights are staples of editorial pages, television commentary, and the general newsroom culture. The media urge protection, and even approval, for those who wish to behave in ways the church says are sinful.

Obviously, there is a conflict here, and it is heightened by a residual anti-Catholicism. This is the oldest of American prejudices, traceable from Puritanism right up through Clinton appointees. Before she was nominated as Surgeon General, Dr. Joycelyn Elders accused the Catholic Church of having been indifferent to black slavery, the plight of American Indians, and the slaughter of Jews in the Holocaust. The *Washington Post* said in an editorial that this was "troubling," and Pat Buchanan fumed on "Crossfire," although few others in the media seemed to be bothered. Possibly they thought Dr. Elders had a point. Catholicism may be an alien religion. As the editorial-page director of the *Philadelphia Inquirer* wrote a few years ago: "The Roman Catholic Church, it needs to be remembered, is quite literally an un-American institution. . . . And its principal policies are established by the Vatican in Rome."

When Clarence Thomas, who was educated by nuns, was nominated to the Supreme Court, then-Governor Douglas Wilder of Virginia asked: "How much allegiance is there to the Pope?" It was a boobish question, but it was taken seriously by some. The syndicated columnist Ellen Goodman defended Wilder. "It isn't liberals, and it certainly isn't Douglas Wilder who have reopened the can of worms marked religion," she wrote. "It's the Catholic hierarchy."

John Corry is a former New York Times *reporter and media critic and the author of* My Times: Adventures in the News Trade *(Grosset/G.P. Putnam's Sons).*

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The *New York Times* once warned that same hierarchy not to press its views on morality too strongly. If it did, the *Times* said, it might destroy the "truce of tolerance" that allows Catholics to worship freely. In the recent mayoral campaign in New York, a prominent city councilwoman said on National Public Radio that Rudolph Giuliani's parochial-school education made him "suspect." The New York press let the remark pass almost unnoticed.

Meanwhile, network news programs that were uncertain how to treat Michael Jackson, and hesitant to examine sexual charges against Bill Clinton, had no difficulty indicting Joseph Cardinal Bernardin of Chicago. A 34-year-old AIDS patient named Steven Cook filed a $10 million lawsuit charging the Cardinal with sodomizing him some 17 years ago. Cook, who had a history of alcohol and drug problems, said he had recalled the incident after undergoing something called memory-recovery therapy. Bernardin, however, was an unlikely candidate to be a pederast. In the last few years he had removed some two dozen priests from parish assignments after they were charged with sex abuse, and also set up hotlines for possible victims. He was once president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops and his reputation was unblemished. Devout Catholics sometimes referred to him as a "holy man," a term they do not use lightly.

Nonetheless, ABC used the $10 million suit against Cardinal Bernardin as its second piece of the night—right after the lead story on the New Jersey election. On CBS and NBC, the coverage was also ample. CNN, meanwhile, seemed to have nothing else on its mind: first Cook's news conference, then Bernardin's, then cut to a taped interview with Cook, then back to a taped segment of Bernardin's news conference, and on to the anchorman's wrap-up:

"He categorically denies the charges against him, but does admit it is the third accusation against him this year—one, a letter from a woman who accused him of satanic rites 36 years ago, one from a man who accused him of participating in an orgy."

Meanwhile, the CNN interview with Cook had been conducted by a very sympathetic correspondent. "I was given some very nice gifts, and then I was led into his bedroom and he performed anal sex on me," Cook declared, describing what he said was his encounter with the Cardinal. "You trusted him," Bonnie Anderson, the correspondent, said softly. If she doubted Cook's story at all, she kept the feeling to herself. Viewers were left only with Cook's unsubstantiated charge—dredged up in memory-recovery therapy. In the Salem witch trials, "spectral evidence" was used against those convicted of witchcraft. Twenty-one people were put to death. Spectral evidence was based on the recovery of apparently repressed memory.

Few who know Bernardin doubt that his name will be one day cleared. The bishops at the conference in Washington issued a statement saying they expected his "full vindication." They also gave him an ovation. Presumably, they hoped the media would notice. As it happened, it was the same day that Archbishop Keeler spoke about the media's "caricature" of the church. Cardinal O'Connor may have had that in mind when he attacked President Clinton's health-care plan the following week. He noted that it would require the church to pay for abortions. This, he said, would violate "the church's basic teaching about the sacredness of life and the evil of procured abortion." The mainstream media, however, hardly noticed. The cardinal was careful to make the attack in his archdiocese's own newspaper. ❐

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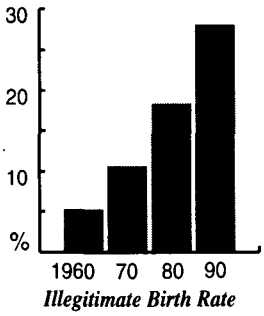

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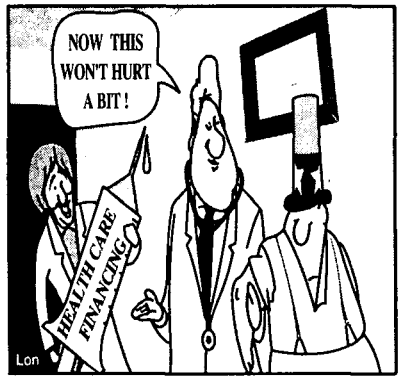

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"All who have meditated on the art of governing mankind are convinced that the fate of empires depends on the education of youth." - Aristotle

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Democrats Misfire on Guns

by Grover G. Norquist

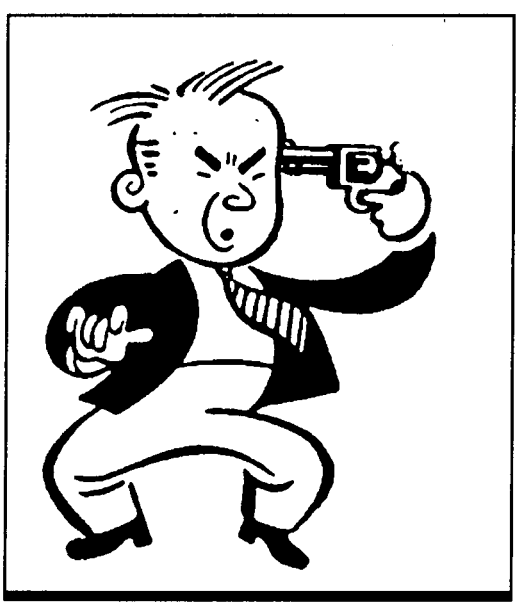
In a two-week span at the end of last year, President Clinton won passage of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), defeated the bipartisan Penny-Kasich legislation that would have made $90 billion in real spending reductions over a five-year period, and won passage of the "Brady Bill," which requires a five-day waiting period for handgun purchases. Clinton's staff began bragging that they could win "anything" if they focused on it for a two-week period.

The White House optimism degenerated into giddiness. Joycelyn Elders called for the legalization of drugs. White House strategists decided to postpone welfare reform (the planned feint to the right in time for the 1994 congressional elections) to concentrate on health care. Clinton announced his opposition to a balanced budget amendment proposed by Senator Paul Simon (D-Ill.) that would require a 60 percent vote of both houses to borrow money and a simple majority to raise taxes. The ideological mask of "New Democrat" was being cast aside, not only by staffers and cabinet members, but by the president himself.

Nowhere was Democratic hubris more evident than on gun control. As a candidate, Clinton had robbed the Republicans of the issue by soft-pedaling his support for the Brady Bill and rejecting suggestions that he supported Michael Dukakis's stated goal of disarming the civilian population. For his part, George Bush lost the gun issue in 1989, when he pushed through an executive order banning the importation of some "assault rifles." In 1992, the National Rifle Association—which had played a key support role in 1980, 1984, and 1988—sat out the presidential election.

Clinton now believes that gun control is a political winner, and recent polls seem to support him. An April 1993 Harris poll showed 89 percent of Americans supporting passage of the Brady Bill "to require a waiting period for the purchase of handguns so that the authorities can check who is buying a handgun." Harris found 82 percent of Americans supporting a proposal that all handguns be registered by the federal government. Attorney General Janet Reno is now calling for federal gun registration and licensing ("Just like cars").

But reading the polls literally is a mistake. First, these numbers are not new. Asked a stand-alone question on guns, the public has always overwhelmingly supported gun control. The hitch is that people who "support gun control" in polls seldom vote on the issue; gun owners often do. In October 1988, one month before George Bush crushed Michael Dukakis, Gallup released a poll showing 91 percent of Americans supported a federal waiting period for gun purchases.



Second, such data is almost always misleading because the questions are asked in a vacuum. Frank Luntz, pollster for the Perot and Giuliani campaigns, showed that 88 percent of Americans believe a citizen has the right to own a gun, 78 percent oppose a gun ban, and 83 percent believe citizens have a right to self-defense. More importantly, asked whether new gun control measures or "stricter penalties for criminals and reduced parole" would best fight crime, 75 percent of Americans favor tougher sentences and only 20 percent favor more gun control. Forty-six percent of Americans believe the Brady Bill will "not reduce gun-related crimes significantly," against only 33 percent who believe it will.

The past year's elections provide a reality check on gun control. Since Clinton's election in November 1992, the gun issue has cost the Democrats one Senate seat and two governorships:

- In a Georgia runoff three weeks after Clinton's win, the gun issue elected Paul Coverdell over incumbent senator Wyche Fowler. Coverdell's 17,000-vote margin is more than accounted for by the National Rifle Association's decision to mail its 90,000 Georgia members three times in support of Coverdell and then to phone each member to get them to the polls. NRA ads ran ten times a day on sixty-eight radio stations.
- In the New Jersey governor's race, incumbent Jim Florio attempted to make the NRA the issue for opposing his vaunted ban on so-called assault weapons. Florio's Republican opponent Christine

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Todd Whitman lost the NRA's endorsement by backing the Brady Bill and the Florio assault-weapon ban, but the NRA made more than 300,000 get-out-the-vote phone calls to likely Whitman voters, and on election day Whitman won by only 27,000 votes. (It was an expensive loss for Clinton and the Democrats. The New Jersey governor is the most powerful governorship in the nation, with roughly 4,000 political appointments. If these appointees spent only four hours a week on their own time doing political work, that would create the equivalent of 400 full-time political activists for the 1994 and 1996 elections. This is a larger political army than the combined staff of the Republican National Committee, the National Republican Senatorial Committee, and the National Republican Congressional Committee, all in one state.)

• In Virginia, attorney general Mary Sue Terry was twenty-nine points ahead in the gubernatorial race when her campaign began to run pro-gun control ads across the state. Terry gun control ads actually ran on Rush Limbaugh's radio show. (The Terry campaign was run by Tom King, a consultant still smarting from the narrow escape of his previous client, Oklahoma Democrat Mike Synar, who was also opposed by gun owners.) George Allen came out in favor of stricter sentencing and opposed parole for violent offenders, and won by a seventeen-point margin. It's a useful rule: the crime issue always trumps the gun issue.

Neal Knox, a director of the National Rifle Association, argues that eight years of Ronald Reagan, an NRA member, and four years of Bush have lulled some gun owners into a false sense of security. "No more," he says. "Now people are waking up to the danger." But sleeping or not, the NRA is a giant. With more than 3.3 million dues-paying members—900,000 of them added in the last 12 months—the NRA dwarfs other political organizations. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce has 215,000 members; the National Federation of Independent Businesses has 600,000 members; the Republican National Committee roughly 300,000. Handgun Control Inc., has 300,000 members.

History should have warned Clinton, or at least congressional leaders, of the dangers of reading raw poll numbers in

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"support" of gun control. Two Democratic senators paid for their "yes" votes on the Gun Control Act of 1968—Joe Clark in Pennsylvania in 1968, and Joseph Tydings in Maryland in 1970. Reagan's turnaround primary victories in North Carolina and West Virginia in 1976 were aided by strong NRA mailings criticizing Jerry Ford's support for handgun bans. The same year, Massachusetts gun control advocates put Measure 5 on the ballot to ban many handguns; it was defeated, 69-31. The gubernatorial victories of John Dalton in Virginia in 1977 and Bob Martinez in Florida in 1986 are credited by the candidates themselves to the gun issue. In 1982, a California gun-control measure on the ballot brought a flood of gun-owners to the polls and helped Republican underdog George Deukmejian defeat Democrat Tom Bradley for governor. In 1992, gun opponent Beryl Anthony, a member of the House Democratic leadership, was defeated in a Democratic primary by gun-owner activism.

Gun-control advocates point to the primary victories of Democrats Tom Andrews of Maine in 1990 and Mike Synar of Oklahoma in 1992 as proof of the power of their issue. But examples of incumbents defeated by challengers on the wings of anti-gun resources or issues are rare. One loss for gun owners occurred in Maryland, where a referendum to repeal a commission that would ban certain weapons was defeated in 1988 through electoral skulduggery. The get-out-the vote offices of the repeal campaign were raided by the police and the get-out-the-vote phone banks were stopped on election eve in a purported effort to stop violations of a ban on "walking around money."

Meanwhile, state constitutional amendments have strengthened the rights of gun owners in North Dakota, Maine, West Virginia, Utah, and Nebraska. Savvy Democratic politicians understand the implications, particularly those who, like Speaker Tom Foley of Washington and Senate Majority Leader George Mitchell of Maine, come from rural and gun-owning states. They may try to slow the liberal clamor for gun registration and confiscation. But they'll have to reckon with the president's willingness to get more gun control today at the expense of fewer Democrats in the House and Senate tomorrow. ❐

RUSSIA WATCH (I)

Bardak Shadows

by Jonas Bernstein

Last summer, a reporter for the English-language *Moscow Tribune* witnessed the following incident:

An elderly man, one of Moscow's legions of pensioners, was crossing a street in the center of the city. When the light changed, he was still hobbling across the intersection in the way of a BMW—one of the makes that have become a status symbol for Russia's *nouveaux riches*. Several strapping young men jumped out of the car and proceeded to beat the old man senseless. The reporter and another Good Samaritan took the victim to a nearby police station, where they were told that they had come to the wrong place and otherwise given the runaround. The exasperated reporter finally asked the detective, "But isn't it your job to deal with situations like this?"

The cop shrugged his shoulders and answered, "This is what democracy brings. Haven't you read Plato?"

If the thugs in this incident were a little more horror-show than the norm, their act of violence was just one of many in the spiral of crime that is accompanying Russia's stagger towards the market system. And the police detective in the above incident, if more erudite than most of his colleagues, was typical in his indifference.

While everyone from Boris Yeltsin to Communist Party leader Gennady Zyuganov is blaming poverty for the electoral fortunes of ultra-rightist Vladimir Zhirinovsky and his Liberal Democratic Party of Russia (LDP), their success can be seen more as a backlash at the country's increasing lawlessness, and frustration at the authorities' inability (or unwillingness) to stop it. The issue was ignored by Russia's Choice, the pro-market bloc headed by Yegor Gaidar, which followed a stay-the-course electoral strategy, with dashes of Commie-bashing (largely unnecessary) and macro-economic analysis (largely boring). Zhirinovsky, meanwhile, promised summary execution of mafia bosses, among other things.

Russians have a name for the situation they now find themselves in: *bardak* (literally "brothel"), which is used as a term for disorder and chaos. In its current usage, it refers to more than just crime. Destitute pensioners rooting through trash cans, cars driving on sidewalks to avoid red lights: Muscovites shake their heads and mutter, "Bardak."

But it is above all episodes of violent crime that arouse Russian ire and disgust. The daily landscape is littered with such acts. Some of them are spectacular, like the recent kidnapping of schoolchildren in Rostov-on-Don (there are ten to fifteen hostage-takings a month in Russia) and the separate murders, apparently mafia hits, of two leading businesspeople on December 2 (there were thirty-eight such assassinations in 1993). Burglaries of flats, car thefts, muggings and vandalism on the *elektrichka* commuter train, which ferries into Moscow those too poor to afford a car, no longer even raise an eyebrow. More than 2.5 million crimes were registered in Russia in 1993, 70 percent of them acts of larceny.

Prior to their capture, the Rostov kid-

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nappers, flying in a commandeered helicopter with the $10 million they received in ransom, dropped a portion of their loot out the door as they passed over the breakaway Chechen Republic, base for some of the most powerful mafia groups in Russia. This act of feudal tribute was a powerful sign of the times, and such incidents only reinforce the feeling of many Russians that their country is controlled by crime lords. Indeed, in November, the weekly *Argumenty i Fakty* published the result of a poll in which the respondents were asked to name who, in their view, holds real power in Russia. "The mafia" came in first, ahead of the president, the army and police, foreign capital, etc.

Frustration with the impotence of the authorities certainly motivated those who backed the LDP. On December 30, *Izvestia* published the results of two surveys carried out by the All-Russian Center for Public Opinion (VTsIOM). One was taken ten days before the December 12 parliamentary election, the second immediately after it. They showed that the typical Zhirinovsky voter—generally either a 25-to-40-year-old worker or a pensioner, male, living in a small city—considered "weakness of government power" problem number one. The anti-reform mood of Zhirinovsky's voters, according to VTsIOM, was aroused "not by the worsening of their material base, but by the growth of disorder, anarchy." Zhirinovsky's voters cited "corruption" and "bribery" as their number-two concerns. *Argumenty i Fakty* claimed in its year-end issue that the level of bribe-takers had increased 15 times during 1993.

The Russian police are conspicuous in this regard. The average "militiaman" is underpaid, undereducated, and unsuited for other work—a prime candidate for corruption. In a big country, there are, of course, honest cops, who try against all odds to do their jobs. But in Moscow, the face of the police the populace most often sees is that of the GAI traffic cop pulling over cars in order to extract bribes.

"The unduly long paralysis of the government and the total helplessness of the police and the public prosecutor's office in solving crimes have led to a catastrophic escalation in violence, and have awakened a feeling of defenselessness in the population," wrote Moscow jurist and veteran crime observer Arkady Vaksberg in the English-language *Moscow Times* on December 30. "The merging of the mafia and other criminal elements with those who are supposed to be fighting them has changed from a theoretical premise into a practical reality, right before our eyes."

Following the two murders on December 2, the Russian Association of Commercial Bankers called a strike to protest the indifference of the Security and Internal Affairs ministries. (One of the victims had headed a large bank.) Officials of the Internal Affairs Ministry, which is in charge of Russia's police forces, admitted that the murdered entrepreneurs had probably been killed after resisting mafia attempts to muscle in on their business, but argued that businessmen deserve no more protection than the average person. Which means, in essence, no protection at all. (After the New Year, police reacted to bad press by agreeing to meet with the bankers.)

In late December, Boris Yeltsin dissolved the Security Ministry. It was a nice gesture, marking a break with the ministry's KGB forebears. Today, however, the average Russian sees an omnipotent mafia as a much greater concrete threat than an omnipotent secret police, and most people would undoubtedly like to see a housecleaning at the Internal Affairs Ministry as well. This does not, however, appear to be in the works. If Boris Yeltsin is insensitive to the *bardak* issue, one can hope that the democrats who contested the election have learned a few lessons from Zhirinovsky's success.

Not all of the democrats ignored the issue. The bloc led by reform economist Gregory Yavlinsky included a plank in its platform calling for the "removal of the mafia from the city markets" as one way to ensure genuine competition and thus slow down skyrocketing prices. Artyom Tarasov, a businessman who fled Russia three years ago after facing KGB persecution, returned to run as an independent for a seat in the new parliament, representing Moscow. He campaigned on a law-and-order ticket, calling for a new tax to raise the salaries of Moscow's 120,000 police officers to $1,000 a month—a princely salary that should certainly be enough to leave them bribe-proof. Tarasov won. Money for the purpose of professionalizing the Russian police (if the Russian government is willing) is an idea Western aid donors should seriously consider.

But Yavlinsky and Tarasov aside, Russia's new democrats and capitalists need to reconsider some of their basic attitudes. Since market reform was instituted in January 1992, it has been de rigueur to argue that, after all, we are in a phase of "primary accumulation," like the Wild West or Chicago in the twenties; but don't worry, the market will become civilized after a few generations.

Russians won't wait that long. And it was clear even before December 12 that the public mood was growing ripe for authoritarian solutions to the *bardak* problem. Following the violence of October 3-4, a two-week state of emergency was imposed in Moscow, including a curfew. Moscow mayor Yuri Luzhkov, with Yeltsin's blessing, used the opportunity to deport from the city nearly 10,000 people from the Transcaucasus and Central Asia who were residing in Moscow without residence permits. The operation, executed by special riot police, was performed with a predictable degree of professionalism: according to Russian human rights groups, there were numerous incidents of violence and pillage on the part of the law enforcers. The move was wildly popular in "liberal" Moscow: its residents have long blamed Caucasian nationals for the city's crime wave. Still, while there are active and vicious Azerbaijani, Georgian, and Chechen crime gangs in Moscow, police officials report that the majority of crime groups operating there are Russian.

Want to hear another statistic? According to press reports, the murder rate in Russia (11 per 100,000) is now higher than that of the United States, which, with its rate of 9 per 100,000, has long been the most violent of the developed democracies. It is regrettable but not surprising that a large number of ordinary citizens who feel unprotected should turn to the knout, and to scapegoating. Zhirinovsky represented most of these, and many people undoubtedly believed that he would do a better job of eradicating crime and disorder than the current administration. Yeltsin's government is going to have to turn its attentions to the bardak question—now. For government inaction is drawing Zhirinovsky voters to the polls and, according to Arkady Vaksberg, "clearing the way for his rise to power." ❐

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Zhirinovsky Up Close

by Cathy Young

Two years ago, a columnist in one of Moscow's liberal papers quipped that tapes of Vladimir Zhirinovsky's speeches were outselling those of professional comedians. Zhirinovsky makes it easy to dismiss him as a maniacal buffoon. One time I heard him speak, he warned that the West's meddling in Russia could lead to "World War IV" and spoke of his party's thwarted efforts to alleviate the food crisis in Moscow by selling meat: "Our meat, the meat of the Liberal Democratic Party!" Days before the election last December 12, he promised that under his policies every Russian woman would have a man of her own: living standards would rise, male mortality rates would plummet, and presto—a husband in every bed.

Actually, Zhirinovsky's performance shouldn't have been that much of a shock to anyone in government or the media—which, unlike most Russians, had had access to the opinion polls of the last ten days of the campaign. The Central Election Commission had prohibited the release of polling data by the media after December 1, ostensibly so as not to influence voters. Some Moscow skeptics think the ban was imposed because the numbers boded ill for the pro-Yeltsin Russia's Choice bloc led by Yegor Gaidar: a December 10 poll disclosed the day after the election showed 20 percent planning to vote for Zhirinovsky, to Gaidar's 19 percent. In fact, it's likely that many people who might have been scared into voting had they known that Zhirinovsky could emerge as the winner stayed home.

At least one observer predicted—even, it turns out, overestimated—Zhirinovsky's success days after the crushed October rebellion. "Because of the ban on many radical [authoritarian] parties," economist Boris Pinsker told me at the time, "there's a serious danger that the remaining ones will gain tremendous strength. Zhirinovsky and his party may get 30 to 40 percent of the vote, because they remain the only option for people of radical left and radical nationalist views."

So who is this man who wants to recapture Alaska and Finland and rid Moscow of traders from the Caucasus and Central Asia? I first heard of him, or rather, I first heard him in April 1990, at a Moscow conference on drug legalization. Speakers included Arnold Trebach of the Drug Policy Institute in Washington, D.C., several bearded Russian radicals, and Vladimir Zhirinovsky of the Liberal Democratic Party. Following the remarks of the pro-legalization Trebach, Zhirinovsky brusquely stated that Russia did not need to be a testing ground for any more social experiments after the one launched in 1917, and wanted only to join the family of civilized nations. Then, a small row erupted as one of the radicals lashed out at the conference sponsors for giving a platform to a known KGB stooge such as Zhirinovsky. "Typical Bolshevist tactics!" the latter barked from his seat. My sympathies, I confess, were ignorantly leaning toward Zhirinovsky, partly out of disgust at the promiscuous way that charges of KGB ties were hurled about in Moscow politics. Later I came up and asked if we could do an interview. He pushed his card at me and said, "Call me if you want."

That very evening, I saw the man on the news at a press conference of some "Centrist Bloc," warning that anti-Communism was divisive and democratic groups should work not only with each other but with the ruling Communist Party. I was beginning to suspect that the bearded radical had a point: it was early 1990, and liberal democrats were generally not welcome on Soviet Central TV. (I eventually learned that the founding conference of the LDP in late March had gotten extensive television coverage.) I never did the interview—and I lost the card.

The next time I saw Zhirinovsky, he was famous, or infamous, having snagged about seven million votes in the Russian presidential election with pledges of cheap vodka and imperial glory. It was December '91, with the shops barer than ever and the Soviet Union gasping its last, and Zhirinovsky was talking to voters in the hall of a Moscow movie theater.

A woman in the audience (about half of which seemed to be curiosity seekers) asked why the party was called liberal democratic. Because, Zhirinovsky replied, "the values of liberal democracy suit us best: the primacy of the individual over state or ethnic interests. Today, we have ethnic democracy: Georgian democracy, Moldavian democracy. This is sad." He denied charges of Russian chauvinism, and pointed out that at his side was LDP general secretary A. Khalitov, a Tatar. Minutes later, he was praising David Duke and Jean-Marie Le Pen. He said that while he was no anti-Semite one had to admit that Russian Jews were not terribly loyal to Russia (Jews in other republics, he added, had a much better record in this regard) and that whenever he was bashed in the press, the article was usually signed by a Jewish name. He warned that if the West persisted in recognizing the Baltics and other ex-Soviet states, Russia could retaliate by sending arms to separatists in Northern Ireland, Quebec, or Spain (that was when World War IV came up).

And so it went, as Zhirinovsky pro-

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fessed devotion to "liberal values such as a free market economy" and claimed that he had gotten food prices to drop 30 percent just by touring a Moscow farm market. He also said that as a lawyer, he held the rule of law in the highest esteem and opposed the death penalty. (I was surprised that he would risk alienating his followers, who probably believe in shooting pickpockets.) In another appearance around that time, he sounded a different note: "When I come to power, there will be a dictatorship. . . . Those who have to be arrested will be arrested quietly at night. I may have to shoot 100,000 people, but the other 300 million will live peacefully." In an LDP gazette in early 1992, the "good" Zhirinovsky reemerged, warning that new presidential elections were needed to avoid getting "our own Pinochet": "Personally, I wouldn't want dark forces to come to power."

So Zhirinovsky's post-election soft-pedalling of his rhetoric is not just last-minute repackaging but a part of his persona all along. Barring multiple personalities, one may surmise that he has sought to corner the brown-shirt vote while maintaining a sufficient veneer of respectability for his more squeamish fans to be able to claim that he has been unfairly maligned. (I was appalled to find that a former school friend of mine had a picture of Zhirinovsky on her desk and voted for him in 1991. "They distort what he says," she firmly assured me. "He's got a very good program." She pointed to a leaflet next to the photo, with slogans of civil liberties and free enterprise.)

Zhirinovsky's history is as paradoxical as his speeches. The fact that, according to Jewish activists in Moscow, this symbol of extreme Russian nationalism was active in Russia's nascent Jewish cultural movement in 1988-89 has already been reported. While Zhirinovsky is now emphatic on the subject of his fully Russian parentage, he didn't sound quite as certain two years ago, when his usual reply to questions about his background was, "Mama was Russian, Father was a lawyer from Poland."

(The Moscow daily *Kuranty* reports that at the ill-fated election-night gala, a triumphant Zhirinovsky ran into Armenian-born democrat Telman Gdlyan—whose New Russia bloc couldn't get on the ballot—and guffawed, "So, when are they gonna make you commander of the Armenian army?" "The same day they make you commander of the Jewish army," Gdlyan retorted. Zhirinovsky slugged him. Gdlyan was about to hit back when the great man's bodyguards barred his way.)

In May 1988, Zhirinovsky spoke at the founding conference of the Democratic Union, the first independent political group in the Soviet Union to openly declare itself an opposition party. He proposed adopting a social democratic platform (DU was more capitalist-leaning) and was elected a member of the party's coordinating board, but soon quit and started building a party of his own. Several attempts by LDP dissidents to oust Zhirinovsky, whom they accused of collaborating with the Soviet régime and turning the party into "a pro-Communist puppet group," failed.

To discuss the LDP program may be superfluous, since there's no evidence that it bears any more relation to reality than did the old USSR Constitution. Some highlights: the 1993 "Program Theses" call for "a socially oriented and regulated planned market economy" and "structural economic reform and the adoption of market methods without economic or social turmoil." A 1992 proposal pledged, in the stock phrases of "right" and "left" authoritarians, to crack down on "speculators and middlemen" and revive industry. Zhirinovsky has vowed to bring exchange rates to one ruble to a dollar (no, he hasn't shown charts illustrating how he will do that). A 1992 appeal to soldiers and officers in the party newspaper promised a host of benefits to active-duty and retired servicemen—not just priority allocation of land, housing, and business loans, but special legal status including reduced criminal penalties for military personnel and permission for officers to "bear arms and use them in any circumstances."

In the New York Russian daily *Novoye Russkoye Slovo*, Moscow commentator Valery Lebedev suggests that Zhirinovsky is in fact a KGB man—who else could have worked, as he did in the 1970s, in the foreign section of the Soviet Peace Committee?—hand-picked to lead a party created as a replacement for the moribund CPSU.

This may or may not be true; I have too little faith in the human capacity to engineer long-term scenarios to be persuaded. The LDP's impressive assets may or may not come from laundered CPSU money and/or from Saddam Hussein. But clearly, for all the buffoonery, Zhirinovsky is shrewd. He has never joined any of the "red-and-brown" opposition blocs such as the National Salvation Front, and thus avoided not only getting lost in the anti-Yeltsinite crowd but being crushed along with it after October 4. (He had not expressed any support for the Supreme Soviet.)

For many educated urban Russians, Zhirinovsky's success will reinforce the old feeling that they are aliens in the savage land of Ivan the Barbarian. Some Western and East European observers, too, are saying that the xenophobic Zhirinovsky vote represents "the real Russia," the Brechtian implication being that the democrats ought to dissolve the people and appoint a new one.

In perspective, though, Zhirinovsky got the votes of 14 million of Russia's 105 million eligible voters (twice as much as he did in 1991). As mentioned before, the fact that signs of his growing strength were withheld from the public didn't help. The government made other dumb moves, from banning pro-Supreme Soviet parties which could have siphoned off some of Zhirinovsky's support to giving virtually no television coverage to pro-reform parties that did not march in lockstep with the Yeltsin line, such as the bloc of market economist Gregory Yavlinsky. Unlike Zhirinovsky, who was on the air a total of 220 minutes the last week of the campaign, these parties lacked the money to buy TV time.

The deeper causes, dissenters such as Yavlinsky and fellow economist Larissa Piyasheva believe, lie in the fact that the reforms of the past two years could have been less painful and much more productive if they had been not less but more radical, if there had been more real privatization, and less opportunity for "nomenklatura capitalists" to plunder the country.

Another explanation for Zhirinovsky's success focuses on fellow LDP candidate Anatoly Kashpirovsky, a hypnotist whose televised sessions have been said to cure anything from warts to cancer if you stared at the screen. LDP voters, the theory goes, simply succumbed to mass hypnosis. ❐

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Lost and Profound

by James Bowman

Treatments of history, politics, and *res publicae* are undertaken by the movies often to give themselves a kind of imprimatur of serious-mindedness. Unfortunately, as Hollywood is a place almost devoid of serious-mindedness, the trick rarely fools the more discerning critics—unless, that is, it is done with some connection to either the Holocaust or the Kennedy assassination. These are the two subjects whose moral import is beyond question even to the most cynical. It is therefore not surprising that Hollywood's two slightest but most pretentious directors, Steven Spielberg and Oliver Stone, have made those two subjects, respectively, their own.

Spielberg's claim was entered at Christmastime with ***Schindler's List***, a film that shares with the *Indiana Jones* sagas a certain glibness in identifying evil by dressing it in a Nazi uniform. And while that trick may be acceptable in an action/adventure movie, it cheapens and trivializes the enormity of the Holocaust. Maybe (I doubt it) there could be a work of dramatic fiction which would make living characters out of the participants in this historical drama and so lend immediacy to it, as the stories of Prince Andrei and Natasha and Pierre in *War and Peace* do to the Napoleonic wars. But Spielberg does not do character. Large-scale action sequences, such as the liquidation of the Krakow ghetto or the herding of people into what may or may not be a gas chamber at Auschwitz, are done with great skill and suspense, but they depend on the reduction of those involved to units in an ensemble motivated only by the most elemental of passions.

In *Schindler's List* there are only three characters—Schindler (Liam Neeson), Itzak Stern, his Jewish accountant (Ben Kingsley), and the sadistic Nazi commandant Amon Goeth (Ralph Fiennes)—who have as many as two dimensions, and all of them remain opaque in the end. We have no more clue why Amon Goeth slaughters Jews at random with a high powered rifle from the balcony of his house than we have why Oskar Schindler saves them at considerable risk to himself. I have nothing against motiveless benignity any more than I do motiveless malignity, but it must be a curiosity. When both the bad and the good are equally motiveless, you get the feeling that the dramatist has not done his work properly. Moreover, there is no sense whatever here of the political realities that allowed such things to happen.

In other words, there is almost nothing from ordinary experience to cling to, and in art as in life that is a nightmare, not a rational experience. Spielberg might claim that the film is beyond criticism for that reason, but then we may ask why it was made at all. The Nazis are evil personified, the Jews are reduced to the level of animals, and Schindler himself goes from a caricature of greed and corruption to a caricature of compassion and humanity, with no stops in between. But the film has really nothing more to say to us than that the Nazis, all except Mr. Schindler, were really very bad guys indeed. We knew that. It is the children, who don't have much use for subtleties of character anyway, who need to be told. And by the fifth time we see an utterly unfeeling Nazi officer shoot a helpless Jew in the head at close range and watch the blood stain the snow, we can assume that even they have got the message.

With *Schindler's List*, Spielberg has gone from making children's movies for adults to making an adults' movie for children. This is definitely Oliver Stone territory. From his simple-minded treatment of the Kennedy assassination, Stone has now returned to his simple-minded treatments of Vietnam with ***Heaven and Earth***, the third in what he rather grandly refers to as a "trilogy" begun by *Platoon* and *Born on the Fourth of July*. A lot of conservatives are no doubt prepared to hate this picture just because of the earlier two, and it's true that there is more than a little residue herein of the pretentious, anti-American, self-pitying, boring, leftie tosh to be found in those earlier films. But *Heaven and Earth* reveals two new aspects to Stone's work that we have not seen heretofore: he celebrates an all-American success story, and he has got religion. Admittedly, the all-American success story is fraught with irony and the religion is Buddhism, but you can't have everything, can you?

The success story is a true one—or a basically true one: that of Le Ly Hayslip (Hiep Thi Le), who has written two volumes of memoirs purporting to show how the life of an innocent and happy Vietnamese peasant girl was shattered by war. She had two brothers in the Vietcong, one of them killed, her father was killed by government forces, and her mother very nearly killed by the VC; her sister became a prostitute, and she herself claims to have endured some pretty improbable torture at the hands of the Americans and rape by the Vietcong. Having borne an illegitimate child to a South Vietnamese grandee, she meets and marries an American marine sergeant named Steve (Tommy Lee Jones) and comes with him from the political collapse of Vietnam to live in San Diego.

The sequence in which she first encounters the USA is the best thing in the film and it points up Stone's own ambivalence about his native land. He portrays amusingly the romance of con-

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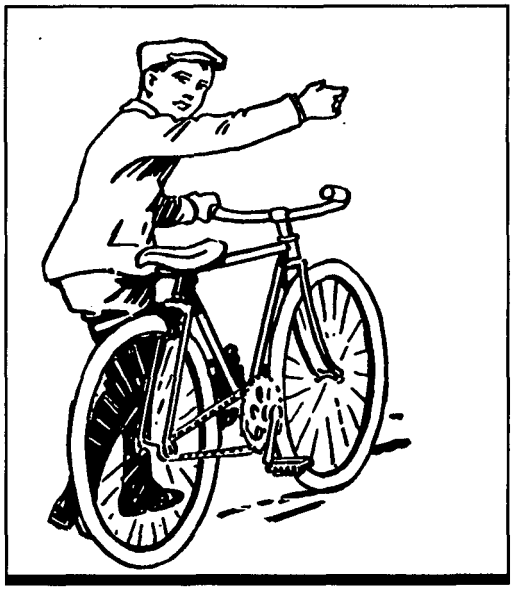
sumerism in Le Ly's first, wide-eyed encounters, to the accompaniment of a Beethoven minuet and the Strauss waltz, "Voices of Spring," with huge Americans and their huge, well-stocked refrigerators and supermarkets. When her two small boys are greeted by a giantess of an aunt saying that she could just eat them up, they flee in terror. "We'll have you and the kids back to normal in no time," she is told, as if "normal" meant to her what it does to Steve's family in suburban San Diego. It is thus a delicious, if perhaps unintended, irony, when the American consumerist paradise really does become normal for her.

"My first wife taught me a real lesson in life," poor Steve tells Le Ly early on in their relationship: "I need a good oriental woman." But instead of a submissive and adoring little lotus blossom he finds that he has got one tough cookie, who demands her own career, makes a packet in real estate and spends her spare time nagging him about his drinking, his business failures, and his interest in guns. Not surprisingly, he blows his brains out. But somehow, to Stone, this does not prevent Le Ly from being a noble representative of her suffering people, who wins through to personal and spiritual fulfillment in spite of the awful things done to her by men, including her violent and abusive husband—who at least can blame his behavior on the USMC and right-wing anti-Communists.

The climax of the film comes with Le Ly's return to Vietnam as a prosperous American businesswoman and mother of two strapping sons. She has to endure a lecture from her surviving brother, full of the same self-pity that is the keynote of *Born on the Fourth of July*, about how much her family has suffered on account of the Americans (apparently they had, among other things, used their own excrement to grow vegetables, which is suffering from stupidity, not Americans), but her mother speaks for the film's quasi-Buddhist sensibility when she tells her that by coming back "you have completed a cycle of growth." This leads Le Ly herself to conclude that "it is wrong to resist fate" and that it is "the role of suffering to bring us closer to God" and that "lasting victories are won in the heart and not in this land or that." Such religiose sentimentalism slathered over the ending like lard is the mark, it seems, of Oliver Stone's middle-aged mellowing. It is an appalling sight.

But it is another way in which Hollywood's ersatz profundity mocks moral seriousness. Just look at the pious yuppie clichés that festoon the ending of ***Mrs. Doubtfire***. Even Robin Williams's ever-amusing antics are scarcely enough to make up to us for having to sit through his character's assurances, more to the adults than to the ostensible audience of children, that there are all kinds of families and that it's all right if mummies and daddies split up so long as there is LOVE. "These are the ties that bind," Mrs. D. says, and, with love, "you will be together in your hearts." Do kids really fall for such guff? I doubt it. But the parents certainly do.

Similarly, the fine acting of Walter Matthau and Jack Lemmon in ***Grumpy Old Men*** is not enough to compensate for the would-be profundity of its message of self-fulfillment: "The only things in life that you regret are the risks that you don't take," it tells us. And "if you see a chance to be happy, you grab it with both hands." Some people in Greater Los Angeles apparently believe this to be both wise and profound. Yet who in the rest of the world does not know that we are at least as likely to regret the risks we do take, and that no one in the culture out of which this film comes ever does anything *but* grab for happiness with both hands? O for a film that would hymn the delights of duty!



That, perhaps, would be asking for too much, although the children's animated feature, ***Batman: The Mask of the Phantasm***, does at least raise the issue in a sympathetic way. The nearest we are likely to get is Krzysztof Kieslowski's ***Blue***—the latest in our long succession of relatively obscure European Movies of the Month. Kieslowski deals not with duty but with its converse, freedom, in a way which reveals its limits. Like Oliver Stone he advertises it as part of a trilogy—one to be based on the colors of the French flag; and the expectation is, as it is with Stone, that we are to get something political. But politics is present only by its ironic absence—and by frequent reference to a forthcoming festival of European Union which takes on almost a comic irrelevance.

A French composer whose concerto in celebration of this festival is, rather improbably, eagerly awaited by all Europe is killed, along with his daughter, in a car crash. The only survivor is his wife, Julie (Juliette Bincoche), who attempts to come to terms with her grief at the loss of husband and child by liberating herself from all human entanglements. She tells a friend that she wants no possessions, no belongings, no friends, no lovers. They are all traps. When someone asks to see her because "it's important," she replies: "Nothing's important." She throws the unfinished manuscript of her husband's concerto in the garbage and gives away everything she owns, except for enough money to live comfortably in a flat in Paris. When the man she buys the flat from asks her what she does she replies: "Absolutely nothing."

Freedom for her is safety—freedom from ties to life and other people in all their heartbreaking perishability. But she is unable, finally, to achieve it. She can't resist making tentative attachments with new people, as she helps her neighbor, a prostitute, and visits her senile mother in a nursing home. There, her mother watches pictures on television ("I have television," she says proudly. "I have the whole world") of bungee jumping—an image of freedom-not-quite. Ultimately, Olivier (Benoît Régent), a former collaborator of her husband's, persuades her to help him, because of his great love for her, to complete the concerto—which thus becomes the symbol both of an impossible ideal of political unity and, on the personal level, of all that ties people together in spite of themselves. It may not be the most profound of statements, but it is a genuinely serious one. ❐

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MY TIMES: ADVENTURES IN THE NEWS TRADE

John Corry

G.P. Putnam's Sons / 240 pages / $24.95

reviewed by ANDREW FERGUSON

At the age of 7, John Corry pushed Billy Boswell into a pail of water. Billy Boswell was not just any classmate. He was the son of a bigshot—a lieutenant in the Fire Department. Corry was made to wait in an empty classroom for his mother to take him home. When she arrived, young Corry left his desk and made sure to raise his seat, as all good boys do. "One could have predicted my life right there," Corry writes in his memoir. "A boy of 7 who must raise the seat of his desk because the rules say he is supposed to is unlikely to be anything but a conservative as an adult. . . . On the other hand, a boy of 7 who is compelled to push the son of a Fire Department lieutenant into a pail of water is likely to fight with authority when he grows up."

Corry offers this vignette to account for the push and pull of his own life—the pint-sized angel and devil who perched on either shoulder, luring him this way and that. As it happens, the tension was well-suited to the life he has led, for a conservative in late twentieth-century America is a walking paradox. By definition, he cherishes order, plays by the rules, takes comfort in orthodoxy. But nowadays the conservative disposition puts you at odds with the rule-makers, the wised-up boys and girls who write the news, teach the kids, publish the books, and produce our entertainments. When the guardians of the new orthodoxy celebrate the unorthodox, as they do, and when the rule-makers discard the old rules, as they have, the conservative, against his better judgment and contrary to his every tendency, becomes a trouble-maker.

If nothing else, it makes for an interesting life. Interesting lives don't necessarily make for interesting memoirs, of course, but John Corry has had the good fortune to lead the first and the literary gifts to write the second. For thirty years Corry was a reporter at the *New York Times*, with a brief hiatus at *Harper's* during its recently disinterred "golden age" of the late sixties and early seventies. More recently, he has served as Presswatch columnist for this magazine. His memoir's immediate audience will probably comprise those with the misfortune to have read the *Times* for most of their lives, and those interested more broadly in journalism's orchestration of the national palaver. But I hate to think its audience will end there. *My Times* is a memoir of a very high rank, a brocade of observation and gossip, reportage and rumination, alternately moving, hilarious, and even profound. There is plenty here, in other words, to hook you in whoever you are.

For example: If I never read another word about the Kennedys it will be too soon. So I thought. But Corry's brushes with the clan—"clan" being defined to include the battalion of butt-boys like Dick Goodwin and Arthur Schlesinger—lead to some delicious tales. In the mid-sixties Corry broke the story of Jackie Kennedy's lawsuit against William Manchester, whose *Death of a President* the clan deemed insufficiently slavish. At first the Kennedys used Corry as a conduit to the front page of the *Times*. But when some of his stories veered from the proper line, his sources dried up; phone calls went unreturned. At last came a call from his colleague, the great Scotty Reston in Washington, who had otherwise managed to ignore Corry for years. What, Reston chummily inquired, would be Corry's story for the next day's edition? Having none, Corry made one up: "A reliable source had told me, I said, that [Bobby Kennedy] thought Jackie was screwing up his career. Uh huh, Reston said, and thanked me." Within minutes, Corry's phone began jingling with calls from the clan, offering help—particularly in refuting any suggestion of a rift between Jackie and Bobby. Reston's next column, in turn, announced that the brother of the fallen president would forever stand by his widow. Scotty, the

Andrew Ferguson is a senior writer for the Washingtonian.

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revered moralist and orotund oracle of high-minded journalists everywhere, can now take his place in line right over there between Dick and Artie. "Reston would never accept free bottles of liquor," Corry writes, "but he did comfort famous men."

The wry understatement is pure Corry, the anecdote is pure *My Times*: juicy and funny and expositive, pricking the pompous, and not, by the way, especially flattering to its teller, either. Corry is the most self-effacing of memoirists. He has had problems with booze and with tomcatting, and his account of both is straightforward and dignified; acknowledged and discussed and then dropped. His circumspection disqualifies him for a guest turn on Oprah but the reader will be grateful for it, and even find it strangely elevating, if only because it is so rare in contemporary memoirs. There are heroes in this book, but its author is not among them.

Abe Rosenthal is. Rosenthal, editor of the *Times* and therefore the largest figure in American journalism during the seventies and eighties, was Corry's close friend, and in many respects his mentor. Corry's portrait of him has its warts: under Rosenthal, for example, the *Times*'s coverage of John Lindsay—especially early on, when the pulchritudinous young mayor was just setting off on his mission to destroy New York City—was as detached as a high school pep rally. (Lindsay himself is a minor, and unexpectedly engaging, character in the book.) But later, as the counter-culture dropped its prefix, Rosenthal struggled to anchor the *Times* in the political center. That center may be a myth, and in any case journalism is never as fair and balanced as even the fairest journalists think it is. But Rosenthal believed in it, and so he was, as Corry writes, "an apostate in a media age of conformity." And you only have to read the *Times* today—with its spongy trend stories, its overheated editorials, its trivial arts criticism—to sense how Herculean was the task Rosenthal set for himself, and how honorably he did his duty. Rosenthal retired in the late 1980s; the *Times* has been busy debasing itself ever since.

Corry quit not long after Rosenthal. But in spirit his break with the paper had come a few years before, in 1982, when he wrote a long story defending the novelist Jerzy Kosinski. As Corry meticulously showed, Kosinski had been the target of a Communist disinformation campaign originating in his native Poland. The disinformation crossed the Atlantic, circulated as rumor among the illuminati of New York, and evolved, inevitably, into an "exposé" in the *Village Voice*. Scandal ensued—the scandal being, of course, that the *Times* had defended an anti-Communist novelist, not that the *Voice* had been duped. In the newsroom, Corry was shunned, and the ink-stained useful idiots raised their piping voices in a soprano Bronx cheer. Following the *Nation*'s lead, *Newsweek* called the story "embarrassing"; the *Washington Post* concurred, by writing a story about the *Newsweek* story about the *Nation*'s story about Corry's story. And the neo-liberal *New Republic*, reviving its pre-war tradition of Stalinist apologetics, insisted that Corry apologize to the *Voice*. Corry declined.

Like so many others in this otherwise cheerful book, the Kosinski story puts the lie to the bogus moralizing and self-proclaimed skepticism of the American press. Corry's final dose of sham came during his last assignment, as the *Times*'s television critic. He may have been the most intelligent critic TV has ever had (not so grand a compliment, really). As his readers from those years will recall, his criticism was measured, skeptical, and fair. He was thus branded an ideologue—a right-wing ideologue!—who soiled the pristine arts pages with his "editorializing." Don Hewitt and Mike Wallace of "60 Minutes" condemned him by name, while from the higher reaches of CBS came offers to buy him off; Anthony Lewis wanted him fired, too. Giving fits to Anthony Lewis: it's an honorable topper for any career. As a conservative, you see, Corry couldn't help but make trouble. And he did so, always, with courage and wit and uncommon honesty—the same qualities he has brought to his memoir. ❐

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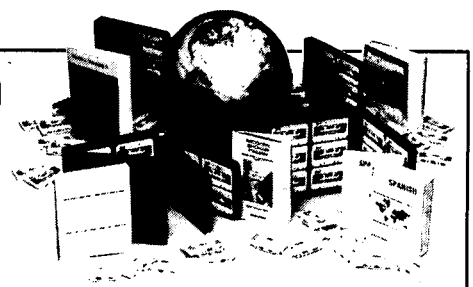

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A DEMOCRACY AT WAR: AMERICA'S FIGHT AT HOME AND ABROAD

William L. O'Neill

Free Press / 480 pages / $24.95

reviewed by MICHAEL BARONE

To many, perhaps most, Americans, it is still simply "the war." Just as the Revolution and the Civil War shaped the United States for generations, so World War II made the nation in which most of us grew up: "postwar America." How Americans fought that war and how it changed the country are the subjects of William O'Neill's lively historical narrative, *A Democracy at War*. This is a book told from the civilian perspective, with admiring glances at the G.I.s, the "homesick, wisecracking skeptics who were at the same time soft touches for a hungry child or a pretty face." Those with no affection for the American character will not like this book.

O'Neill's affection is flecked with bits—sometimes rather large bits—of irritation and anger. He is angry that Americans before Pearl Harbor wanted to help Britain defeat the Nazis but didn't want to take any risk of war. (But polls almost always show that voters want all good things and are willing to pay no price; it is their leaders' job to resolve those contradictions. It should be a comfort to know that Bill Clinton's pollster Stan Greenberg does not ask questions about foreign affairs.)

He is angry that the election year of 1940 was lost to mobilization. (But Franklin Roosevelt took grave political risks when he gave destroyers to Britain and signed a draft law just before the election—although he saw to it that a Republican, Secretary of War Henry Stimson, drew the first draft numbers out of a fishbowl.)

He is angry that Americans did not ration more goods, did not pay more taxes, left the operations of the draft up to local boards, and ultimately drafted too few men—and, he interestingly adds, women. (But he concedes handsomely that our Tocquevillean nature was our strength: "The very same democratic forces that kept the country from preparing for this war had shaped its youth in such a way as to enable them to win it. . . . Localism, the curse of effective national government, was at the same time not only intrinsic to American democracy, but a superb maker of men.")

O'Neill, like almost everyone at the time and most historians since, is harshly critical of early efforts at mobilization. Why were there so many bottlenecks, labor shortages, dumb decisions, so much high-level bickering? What we now know about command economies should explain that a mobilization run largely by commands could not have worked smoothly. What is amazing is that these Americans of fifty years ago did so much—built so many planes and ships, assembled such talented armed forces—so well.

O'Neill has his personal favorites. He loves Bernard Baruch, the would-be mobilizer, who previous readings had convinced me was a blowhard. He hates the undeniably unpleasant but undeniably able Admiral Ernest King. ("One thing that might help this war," Dwight Eisenhower confided to his diary in March 1942, "is to get someone to shoot King.") He shows a wonderful appreciation of Eisenhower and Patton. He is harsh on MacArthur's faults but cheerfully celebrates his strengths.

President Roosevelt does not win his affections, though O'Neill concedes that most of FDR's big decisions were right: The war in the Pacific should have been subordinated to the War in Europe. North Africa should have been invaded in November 1942, since the U.S. needed politically to move somewhere in the European Theater that year. The Normandy invasion should have been insisted on in 1944, if not 1943; the Yalta agreements were a game attempt at making the best of a weak American hand in Eastern Europe. But O'Neill doesn't spotlight one of Roosevelt's great strengths, his knack for picking the right person for almost every job he considered important—which was combined with a Reagan-like indifference to appointees for tasks he thought unimportant.

O'Neill, a social historian, occasionally writes with an eye on the academy. He makes a good case that many more women should have been in the armed services, to take over non-combat jobs from men. He censures the segregation of blacks and the internment of Japanese-Americans. He cites the interesting recent books on sex and homosexuality in the war. He notes how few "people of color" lived in most American cities.

But such preoccupations are driven more by a desire for completeness than by an obsession with political correctness. O'Neill usefully engages the moral issues of the time that are still contested

Michael Barone is a senior writer at U.S. News & World Report.

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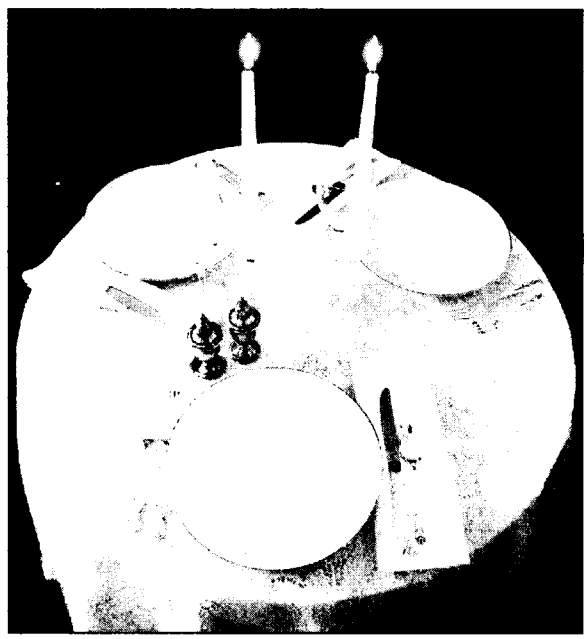
today. He strongly condemns the saturation bombing of German and Japanese cities, arguing that in Germany it served no useful military purpose and mentioning that some of those bombs could well have been targeted at the death camps. But it *did* serve a useful purpose in Japan, where civilians seemed determined to resist the expected American invasion, and O'Neill never addresses George Orwell's argument that enemy civilians have no moral entitlement to better treatment than the 18-year-old soldiers who had no part in determining their nation's course. And after indicating some sympathy with critics of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki A-bombs, he argues convincingly that decision saved on balance many lives and was morally justified, since Japan surely would not have surrendered otherwise. Or, as he quotes Truman aide George Elsey: "It is well and good to come along later and say the bomb was a horrible thing. The whole goddam war was a horrible thing."

The war was also a learning experience, and the most endearing thing about *A Democracy at War* is that it shows again and again how Americans did things better and better as the war went on. They learned to ship goods in convoys and to have planes lay mines. They learned to treat battle fatigue ("neuropsychiatric cases") and to fight effectively in units. Generals like Eisenhower and enlisted men in artillery units performed vastly better in 1944 and 1945 than they had in 1942 and 1943, and American officers and troops learned how to execute supple and complex maneuvers. This was no accident. As O'Neill writes, "The great thing about democracy is that it self-corrects."

The war effort also built a new America. The economy grew vastly during the war years, and millions of Americans were moved around to the new war industry zones—the West Coast and California especially, but also the East Coast ports and Detroit, away from the center of the country and the impoverished Deep South. Americans were able to pay 45 percent of the cost of the war as it was being fought, even when it took half the gross national product, borrowing the rest from what turned out to be a prosperous postwar nation. It was prosperous largely because the war taught Americans to work in large organizations in adaptive and creative ways.

World War II was fought by big government. It was supplied by big business. (Roosevelt had not nationalized the railroads and big war industries, as Wilson had, but built factories for contractors like Henry Kaiser, who had the shrewdness to hire Tommy Corcoran as his lobbyist.) And it was manned by big labor, whose membership swelled thanks to agreements secured by a sympathetic administration despite an unfriendly Congress. For a long generation after that war, Americans were happy "organization men," producing impressive economic growth despite high marginal tax rates, within the confines of what critics thought were stifling organizations. Over time, Americans lost their gift for working in big units: by the 1970s, big government was clumsy and bureaucratic, big business was producing shoddy goods, and big labor had lost touch with new workers. But it is good to be



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reminded of what that World War II generation accomplished.

And good to be reminded of what a fearsome task they had. Last summer I visited the Normandy beaches, saw the graves near Omaha Beach, where the invasion was nearly beaten back that first day, saw the church at Ste. Mère Eglise where the paratrooper's parachute was impaled on the steeple, saw the cliffs at Pointe du Hoc which the Rangers climbed under fire. The calmness of the beaches today contrasts with what we sense from films and museum exhibits—the thousands of ships, the overwhelming noise and smoke from artillery fire in every direction, the churning seas and stinging bullets. The young men who went to Normandy must have thought, *Why me?* even as they were wondering whether they would live out that day or the week. We know now that they were the men who began the fifty-year task of rolling the tide of totalitarianism back across the entire continent of Europe. ❐

THE CULTURE OF DISBELIEF: HOW AMERICAN LAW AND POLITICS TRIVIALIZE RELIGIOUS DEVOTION

Stephen L. Carter

Basic Books / 328 pages / $25

reviewed by FRANCIS X. ROCCA

In *The Culture of Disbelief*, Yale Law School professor Stephen Carter argues that American "legal and political culture" is hostile to religion. He points to recent Supreme Court decisions that violate the spirit of the First Amendment religion clauses; to public schools whose curricula contradict basic tenets of their students' faiths; and to a mainstream press that treats religiosity as at best a harmless "hobby" and at worst a dangerous aberration. Religion has been trivialized by the combined forces of an ever-expanding welfare state, jealous of any institution that challenges its influence on citizens' lives, and a philosophy of rationalism that denies divine authority as a source of factual or moral knowledge—in a word (Carter's word), by liberalism.

Yet Carter insists that it is liberals who should be alarmed; if they are not, it is because they fail to understand religion's vital function in a democracy. Carter's is a Tocquevillean idea of sects as "independent mediating institutions" between the individual and the state, bulwarks against tyranny because they compete with the government for the citizen's allegiance. Most importantly, they serve as "autonomous sources of moral understanding," often in defiance of prevailing values. It is to religious activism that we owe abolitionism and the civil rights movement, something liberals now conveniently forget when they decry the Religious Right's involvement in politics.

Carter, who is a scholar of constitutional law, locates one great threat to religious freedom in the judiciary's misinterpretation of the First Amendment. The Supreme Court has weakened the Free Exercise Clause in recent decisions, by affirming the rights it bestows only to the extent provided by other constitutional guarantees—of free speech, assembly, or equal protection of the laws. This leaves the religious individual free to communicate his beliefs, but does not necessarily protect religious communities in the practice of those beliefs, including worship. In *Employment Division* v. *Smith* (1990), the court affirmed sanctions against members of the Native American Church for taking peyote as part of a church ritual. The law in question, Justice Scalia reasoned, was not an act of anti-religious discrimination; it was merely intended to curb drug use.

The premise of neutrality that underlies this reasoning is one Carter finds specious:

> The ideal of neutrality might provide useful protection for religious freedom in a society of relatively few laws, one in which most of the social order is privately determined. That was the society the Founders knew. In such a society, it is enough to say that the law leaves religion alone. It is difficult, however, to see how the law can protect religious freedom in the welfare state if it does not offer exemptions and special protection for religious devotion.

Before the state can enforce any law inhibiting free exercise, Carter says, it should be made to show a "compelling interest"—a much higher standard than usually required to sustain regulation. This is the standard codified in the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (a response to the *Smith* decision), which the author endorses and which President Clinton signed into law last November.

Yet along with this accommodation by the government—"a form of affirmative action" for religion—Carter calls for sacrifice from the religious groups themselves. To preserve their autonomy, they must back out of the "Faustian bargain" of privileged tax status, lest the government use it to influence their theology and practices. He sees a harbinger of such meddling in New York City's unsuccessful attempt to withhold a permit from the Ancient Order of Hibernians unless their St. Patrick's Day parade included gay groups.

Interpretation of the First Amendment is also at issue in the many battles over public school curricula. The Establishment Clause, Carter reminds us, was written to protect church from state, not vice versa. The court forgot this when it ruled in *Lemon* v. *Kurtzman* (1971) that any statute for which a religious motivation can be inferred amounts to government sponsorship of religion. Carter emphatically rejects such a test. After all, a law against

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murder could be motivated by a desire to observe the Fifth Commandment. Laws that require the teaching of "scientific creationism" alongside evolution are unconstitutional, he believes—not because those laws are religiously motivated, but because creationism is "at heart, an explanation for the origin of life that is dictated solely by religion."

That does not make the explanation irrational. What troubles Carter most about this particular controversy is the rhetoric of the creationists' opponents: words such as "deranged," "stupid," and "pea-brained." He points out that "the creationist rejection of evolution theory rests on a nontrivial hermeneutic and a rational application of it to the evidence." The hermeneutic happens to be that of Biblical inerrancy, a principle of fundamentalism. At root, the dispute is a clash of epistemologies. Creationists refuse to make a distinction that much of the post-Enlightenment world takes for granted: between knowledge, the realm of science; and belief, the realm of religion.

Carter's solution is that parents who believe their children are being taught untruths by the public schools should be free to withdraw their children from parts of the curriculum—not merely on factual grounds but on moral ones. Permitting parents to pull their kids out of sex education and science instruction points logically to letting them out of public education altogether. And Carter, while he stops short of endorsing private school vouchers, insists that, if a voucher plan is enacted, it must not exclude religious schools.

If the public schools want to prevent an exodus in that event, they might consider making themselves more congenial to religious families. Classroom prayer is constitutionally out of the question, Carter thinks, since it is by nature coercive, but what most religious parents really want from the schools is not proselytizing but values education. Sexual abstinence for children is one moral rule Carter figures most of us can agree on. To those who scoff that children won't listen to such preachment, he counters that children are no more likely to listen to the lessons in multicultural tolerance which liberals favor. Here I think he seriously underestimates the determination of the opposition; there are those for whom preaching abstinence amounts to preaching intolerance. The prospects for consensus on the matter are dim.

But that dispute is truly trivial compared to the one over abortion. Carter notes that a majority of Americans believe a fetus is a human being, a belief he traces ultimately to religion. He takes it as yet another piece of evidence that the dialogue between those with different ways of knowing can be morally fruitful:

> Because of this ability of the religions to fire the human imagination, and often the conscience, even of nonbelievers—as, for instance, the civil rights movement did—the religions should not be forced to disguise or remake themselves before they can legitimately be involved in secular political argument.

Yet what are the consequences of argument in this case? A majority also favor the continued legality of abortion, and Carter is one of them. Personhood, it turns out, is not the decisive issue, no matter what the Court conceded in *Roe* v. *Wade* (1973). "The Fourteenth Amendment does not guarantee a right to life—it guarantees only that life cannot be taken *by the state* without due process of law." A sigh of relief goes up from reasonable people across the land, and the debate on where human life begins can continue in more polite tones, now that the point is moot.

Can Carter really believe that it is only extremists who will not be satisfied by abstract talk about "epistemic diversity"? His last chapter, called "Religious Fascism," is largely an attack on Pat Robertson and his Christian Coalition, which he calls "an un-Christian effort to use religion as a force for fostering division and hatred rather than one for fostering brotherhood and healing." Secular liberals, Carter admits, share the blame for Robertson's success because they have dismissed the fears of religious people about the state of our society, and he calls on liberals to practice a true "politics of inclusion." Carter apparently believes there are no questions on which well-meaning dialogue will not bring compromise. Those who disagree are increasingly forced—not by any "demagogue" but by the nature of the questions themselves—to choose one side or the other. ❐

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THE DOWNING STREET YEARS

Margaret Thatcher

HarperCollins / 914 pages / $30

reviewed by ANDREW ROBERTS

The reception in Britain of Margaret Thatcher's autobiography has been entirely in keeping with the rest of her career. The chattering classes have derided it, treating it with barely concealed contempt. The general public has gone out and bought it—over half a million copies in the English language alone, after only four weeks of publication. It is now being reprinted and translated into fourteen languages.

For all their jibes, the *bien pensants* and liberals have been unable to stymie the book's popularity. When I went to get my copy signed, the line of people waiting in the cold, two hours before the author even arrived at the bookshop, stretched halfway down one of London's longer streets.

It is exactly because she is such a phenomenon that this book is so hard to review objectively; and much of Britain's liberal media have not even tried. The political commentator Robert Harris—author of the best-seller *Fatherland*—wrote in the *Independent on Sunday* that "it comes as no surprise to find her autobiography is shot through with malice, contempt, rage and hatred like no political memoir since—well, *Mein Kampf*—to which it bears more than a passing resemblance" (ignoring the fact that Hitler's book was not a memoir). Harris continued: "It is a nasty piece of work spawned by bitterness and frustration. It is overlong, overhyped, deluded and disloyal, and one finishes it relieved that the experience is over."

In fact, far from being nasty, much of the book reads too much like a successful company chairman's report and accounts. It is a serious—perhaps overserious—explanation of the way Lady Thatcher hoped to regenerate her third-division, post-imperial country using only guts, luck, unremitting hard work, mastery of detail, and a messianic belief in Britain's potential.

Many literary editors hit on the (hardly original) idea of sending the book to her political enemies to review. Two of the men who brought her down, Nigel Lawson and Geoffrey Howe, predictably savaged it in the *Evening Standard* and *Financial Times* respectively. "Margaret Thatcher sets standards of self-regard hitherto unknown," complained Lawson. In fact, the record for that was set by his own autobiography, in which he devoted 1,300 pages to proving that he never made a single error at the Treasury. Howe, after some trite praise and crocodile tears, was equally dismissive.

One of the unfairest quips of all came from Simon Jenkins in the *Sunday Times*, who sneered that "when the end was nigh, she was found sitting in a box in Versailles." In fact, of course, Thatcher would have far preferred to have been in London during the crucial first ballot for the leadership: the reason she was in Paris was the CSCE summit, which wound up the Cold War. Operation Desert Shield was in place, and the meetings she had with Bush, Gorbachev, and Mitterrand were of vital importance. Had she been prepared to give her own career as high a priority as she gave the British national interest she would have stayed in London, where she might have been able to bring over the two votes she needed to win the first ballot.

One of the criticisms leveled against *The Downing Street Years*, repeated recently by Douglas Hurd in the British *Spectator*, is that Lady Thatcher has shown too much haste in dashing into print. In fact, both Churchill and Eden brought out their memoirs within three years of leaving office, the former while still Leader of the Opposition.

At a time when John Major has decried the eighties as "a golden age that never was," and described the only three Thatcherites left in his cabinet as "bastards," it is clear that the record needed to be set straight. Major has proved in Britain, just as Bush did in America, how easy it is for politicians to get blown off course in this post-charismatic age, especially if they have no ideological star by which to steer.

Thatcher explains early on that all she needed in her cabinet were "six good men" to carry out her policies. But it was rare that she even got that number. Hers was always a radical, even revolutionary, philosophy, quite out of kilter with the rest of postwar conservative thought. The

Andrew Roberts is the author of The Holy Fox: A Biography of Lord Halifax, *published in London by Weidenfeld and Nicolson.*

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extraordinary thing about her career was not that she was brought down in 1990, but that she managed to outmaneuver the liberals, collectivists, interventionists, and pro-Europeans in her party to survive for so long.

The method of her fall—viciously knifed by her colleagues after three election victories—is told superbly in the final fifty pages of the book. The sixty pages on the Falklands War and the forty on the Miners' Strike of 1984-85 are also gripping. Non-British readers might find the accounts of public spending debates, local government finance, and housing reform hard going, but it is a well-indexed book with a chapter devoted to each subject, so they can easily be skipped through. The librarian of one gentlemen's club in London has cheekily classified the book under Reference rather than Autobiography.

American readers are nevertheless particularly well catered for. Ronald Reagan unsurprisingly emerges as one of the heroes, although Al Haig does not come out well, at least from a British perspective. It is revealed that he intended to inform the Argentine *junta* of the British Government's intention to recapture the South Georgia Islands during the Falklands War. The account of George Bush's inclination to "go wobbly" during the Gulf Conflict will interest but not necessarily surprise people.

What emerges most clearly from the book is how Margaret Thatcher's failures were almost always born of her timidity, rather than her boldness. Whenever she acted on gut instincts—which were those of Middle England—she won through. It was only when she was diverted by outside pressures—the Foreign Office, media, Civil Service, her liberal colleagues, or the chattering classes who always loathed her—that disaster struck.

Sheer political correctness—or as she puts it "presentational difficulties"—persuaded her not to appoint her ally Nicholas Ridley as chancellor after Nigel Lawson's resignation. Instead she promoted John Major, who with Douglas Hurd forced her into the European Exchange Rate Mechanism at the wrong time and wrong level. The row that has developed over her claim in this book that Nigel Lawson had made the pound shadow the deutsche mark at huge expense and in contravention of cabinet policy could have been proved with a simple graph plotting interest-rate changes against the exchange rate.

The community charge—the unpopular "poll tax" that helped bring her down—ought to have been brought in immediately after a general election rather than during the run-up to one. For a revolutionary, Lady Thatcher was not enough of a factional leader. She allowed supporters to languish on the backbenches, while promoting ideological opponents, all of whom turned out to have knives concealed in their togas. By 1990 she had lost the instinct for self-preservation that had been her constant companion ten years earlier, and suicidally allowed the wounded elephant Geoffrey Howe to remain in government.

The lack of a concluding chapter is disappointing. As a Tory icon, Lady Thatcher stands with Burke, Salisbury and Churchill, but her philosophy ought to have been spelt out once again. Her struggle against Britain's debilitating postwar drift, overweening union power, and consensus politics needed to be put into the greater context of the moral philosophy of Thatcherite Conservatism. The late Shirley Letwin's recent *The Anatomy of Thatcherism* goes into the driving force behind her actions: Democratic capitalism, according to Thatcher "was a moral and social, not just an economic system, it encouraged a range of virtues." But this vital aspect of her philosophy is skated over in a mere three pages.

This book will provide useful ammunition to those who remember Lady Thatcher's eleven-and-a-half years in power as an all-too-brief shining moment in British history. It was a valiant attempt to reverse a national decline which had been evident since 1918, and which has clearly set in again. Whether she succeeded in doing much more than momentarily arresting the process must be left to historians. They will certainly not be short of research material—hers is the twelfth cabinet minister's autobiography to go over the 1979-90 period, with Geoffrey Howe's still to come. What is over here called "The Battle of the Biographies" has thus far been fought with conventional weapons; with *The Downing Street Years* it has now gone nuclear. ❐

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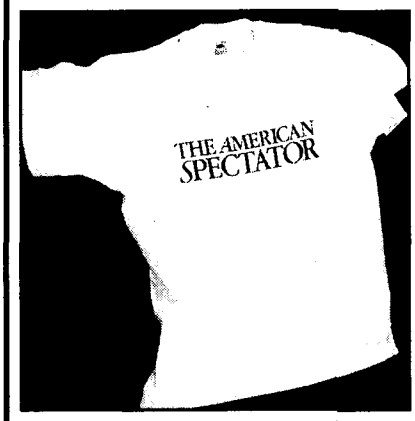

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MARK ROTHKO: A BIOGRAPHY

James E. B. Breslin

University of Chicago Press / 700 pages / $39.95

reviewed by M. D. CARNEGIE

In late February 1969, Mark Rothko signed a million-dollar contract with the Marlborough Gallery. It was, he crowed to the poet Stanley Kunitz, "the greatest contract ever signed by a living artist." "Living" was not entirely a pleonasm; after fellow abstract expressionist Jackson Pollock slammed his car into a tree, Sir Herbert Read quipped, "Death is the greatest thing that can happen to an artist." The prices for Pollocks exploded immediately.

Rothko watched his own price tags rise steadily throughout the sixties. But the blessing of the marketplace had done little to allay Rothko's fears that his career had been a failure, that his paintings—systematically reduced over the years to superposed blocks of color—amounted to nothing. When the gallery's owner and vice-president came to select the works to be purchased with the contract, Rothko refused to admit them to the studio proper and forced them to sit in the reception area. He glared at them silently and drank glass after glass of scotch. Afterwards the three men took lunch in a Chinese restaurant. Rothko ordered a whole bass, charcoal-blackened; he picked it up with his hands and gnawed at it until it disintegrated, the blackness smearing all over his face and clothes. On the morning the gallery was due to choose works for yet another contract, almost a year to the day later, Rothko took an overdose of barbiturates and slashed his forearms open.

Modern art has often been a question of the emperor's clothes, and ever since Marcel Duchamp first exhibited a porcelain urinal, artists have dodged and feinted with the notion that there just might not be any there there.

M. D. Carnegie is a contributing writer for Washington CityPaper.

As a matter of philosophical interest and artistic playfulness, the game was a source of tremendous liberation and even progress. In the nineteenth century Hegel had posited not only an end to history but also an end to art—namely when art became solely a matter of trying to answer the philosophical question of what it, art, was. Duchamp's *Fountain* began the questioning, and as art evolved into its modern role, no longer in the service of church, crown, or state, artists discovered an apparent infinity of forms with which to work.

But for the artist more concerned with spiritual matters than the working out of a

theoretical program, the posturing and theorizing could never have been wholly satisfactory. Rothko was such an artist: An eager philosophe in his earlier years, he refused to write or talk about art theory as his personal style matured. He once said that viewers who broke down and cried before his paintings were having the same sort of religious experience as he did when he painted them. But he was also plagued by self-doubt, particularly in the last decade of his life when he suddenly became wealthy and famous. Though abundant criticism and theory spouted forth in defense of modern art in all its forms—not least of all from the artists themselves—it is difficult to imagine how an artist who followed Rothko's path could not arrive at bitter disillusionment.

After laboring for decades in obscurity, stone-broke and living on bean soup, he rose to the pinnacle of art-world success. His canvases came to fetch tens of thousands apiece; and that same success, as it has done ever since the gallery system became the mechanism of art commerce, transformed the name of the artist into a commodity. Owning "a Rothko" became an ever-cruder benchmark of status; the fruits of his toil became accoutrements of Park Avenue sophistication, colorful complements to the Ettore Sottsass chair and the new wall-to-wall carpeting. The artist, for years an outsider to the art establishment, became a *cause célèbre,* and his rantings against the false security of the plastic bank-book rang hollow in the face of an estate worth hundreds of thousands of dollars. In despair, the painter looks at his life's work and finds square after square of unbroken blocks of color. There are no pietàs, no Madonnas, not even simple human forms that might offer sustenance or even reassurance. Just rhombus after rhombus of red, giving way in later years to somber grays and blacks as Rothko's self-doubts mount. Was this the goal of the decades of sacrifice and struggle?

We should expect a biography to offer some clues, if not come to a conclusion, about questions so central to a modern artist's life. James E. B. Breslin's biography fails to address these considerations, in part because he writes as a devotee, but more importantly because he mistakenly takes the dates and data of a life to constitute its essence. They seldom do, and never in the case of an artist, who must needs follow a highly individual logic of development, one largely indifferent to the chronology that circumscribes the lives of mere mortals. If modern art proffers no there there, Breslin produces no Rothko here, and that makes these 700 pages a mighty tough slog.

This is the first full biography of the painter, and perhaps it was Breslin's excitement at being the first to plough the field that causes him to stop for every stone. American biographers have a well-documented fetish for excess, and the fact that seven years were spent concatenating this hodgepodge of trivialities ought to serve warning to other Boswells aspirant: names and addresses do not a man's life make.

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Breslin's copious research produces 543 pages of repetitive and badly organized narrative, 117 pages of documentation and footnotes, and even seven pages of the author's tastelessly presumptuous warbling on the difficulties of writing the present book.

The author shows us photos from his trip to Rothko's native Dvinsk: Here is a view across the river the mighty artist would have seen when he was six, there a gander at the local wood. A photo of the nondescript building that was Rothko's high school in Oregon is shown. Breslin reproduces in their entirety two embarrassing poems that have survived from Rothko's youth ("And the Brute-Man stood erect and knew himself") and graciously doesn't forget to add: "These are the literary productions of a young man."

The naive faith that such trivia somehow illuminate a man's life is a precise analogue of the name-brand faith that has driven so much of the excess of our century's art world—and driven so many of its artists crazy. If a misunderstood square of paint is valuable because it's "a Rothko," then how much light the great artist's scribblings must cast on those inscrutable squares! They are pure abstractions, after all; and in an age more in debt to Freud than the Father, their fields of color are especially likely to be interpreted rather than experienced, ascribed a meaning instead of simply evoking one.

In the end, Breslin's devotion to Rothko's work precludes any consideration that the painter might have had reason to have profound doubts about his luminous squares of color. The moderns begged the question of what art was, and if it is a philistine response to deny the whole modernist enterprise, it is nevertheless a response implicit in the questions they raised. Rothko's work is often beautiful; but the ironies of modern life have rendered simple expressions of beauty incomplete, and a failure to grasp this notion is a failure to understand an essential aspect of our life and times.

On the eve of the opening of New York's Municipal Art Gallery, one of the workmen who had helped convert the brownstone into a gallery took a look into the room where Rothko and his group were exhibiting and said, "These paintings ain't supposed to tell you anything except what's the matter with the guys that painted them." Breslin, for all his loving reseach, can't see how the man might have been right. ❐

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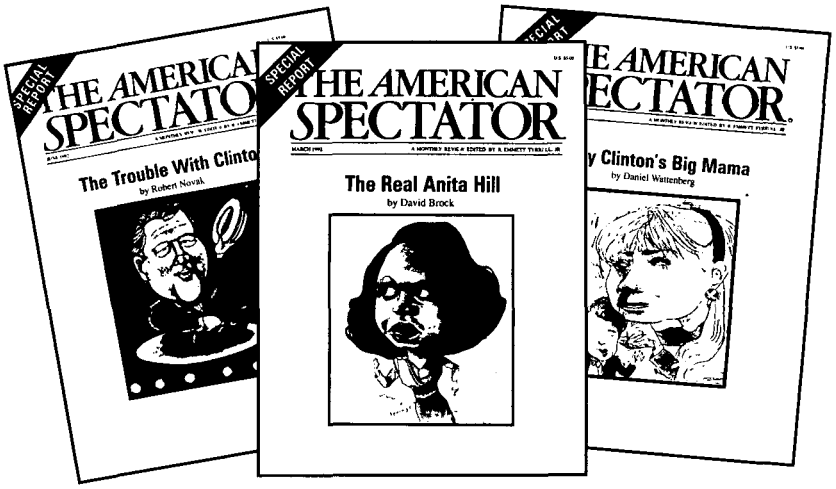

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ASSASSINATION IN KHARTOUM

David A. Korn

Indiana University Press / 256 pages / $24.95

reviewed by DANIEL PIPES

In the minutes before 7 p.m. on March 1, 1973, a diplomatic reception was breaking up at the Saudi embassy in Khartoum, the capital of Sudan. As the ambassadors left the party and dispersed to find their drivers, a volley of machine-gun fire rang out. Eight masked gunmen of Black September, a covert Palestinian organization, burst out from the shadows and commandeered into the embassy's main reception room all those not fleet of foot enough to escape. The diplomats were sat down on the floor and compelled to identify themselves by nationality, whereupon the assailants released most of them. They kept just five: two Americans, Ambassador Cleo Allen Noel, Jr. and chargé d'affaires George Curtis Moore; a Belgian; a Jordanian; and a Saudi.

Twenty-six hours of feverish negotiations ensued. On the evening of the 2nd, the Beirut headquarters of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) sent an order of execution to the terrorists via radio broadcast: "Why are you waiting? The people's blood in the Cold River cries for vengeance" ("Cold River" was the code word for executing the captives). Recordings of that broadcast have disappeared, but it appears that Yasir Arafat, then as now chairman of the PLO, personally delivered the order. Soon after he did, the two Americans and the Belgian were bound, lined up against a basement wall, and shot dead.

Mission accomplished, the eight assailants gave themselves up to the Sudanese authorities. Months of prevarication then passed—for no one in the early 1970s relished the prospect of crossing the PLO—before a Sudanese court, on June 24, 1974, sentenced the eight killers to life in prison. This impressive-looking decision was actually a sham, for within hours Sudan's president had commuted the sentences to a mere seven years. He then dispatched the eight from his country by putting them on a plane to Cairo. Three of the prisoners promptly disappeared. The remaining five did in fact serve out their full sentences, with extra time tacked on at the end—a highly unusual event in the Arab countries.

David A. Korn, the author of *Assassination in Khartoum*, himself played a small part in the drama. In the mid-1960s he had worked for Moore, one of the two dead Americans; then, during the siege at Khartoum, he worked at the Department of State's Operations Center, doing what little he could to save the lives of his two colleagues. Twenty years later, he has published a study that suitably remembers the victims and honors their memory.

But *Assassination in Khartoum* is more than a compelling account of the incident and its repercussions: it has a current significance the author could not possibly have anticipated. With the recent signing of an Israel-PLO accord, Korn's meticulous inquiry raises important questions about the PLO as an institution, the character of its chairman, and American policy.

Bringing the murder of Noel and Moore back to public attention highlights the unpleasant fact that the PLO has on a number of occasions attacked American citizens. A 1986 Senate document lists forty-two incidents between 1968 and 1985 in which American citizens suffered depredations at PLO hands. The best-remembered took place in October 1985, when Leon Klinghoffer, an elderly invalid, was shot and thrown overboard the Italian cruise ship *Achille Lauro*. The most deadly was the bombing that killed eighty-eight passengers on TWA flight 707 in September 1974 en route from Tel Aviv to New York. In other words, Americans have their own, serious problem with the PLO, quite independent of Israel's. Yet, if Jerusalem is ready to do business with the PLO, who are we Americans to hold back?

The question points to the odd logic whereby Americans tend to view their interests in the Middle East in terms of Israel's—and not just those Americans sympathetic to the Jewish state. The virulently anti-Zionist Talcott Seelye, a former U.S. ambassador to Syria, says he long opposed Menachem Begin's policies not because they harmed America but because he found them "antithetical to Israel's long-term interests"! Rep. John Bryant (D-Tex.) once introduced a bill to withhold U.S. aid from Israel in order "to protect the people of Israel from the extreme policies" of the Likud government.

The murder of Cleo and Moore led to another strange case of putting Israel first. Several pro-Israel organizations sought in early 1986, without success, to indict Arafat under U.S. law on criminal charges for his personal involvement in the Khartoum murders. The Department of State ought to have been delighted to find this ally in its effort to protect its own people from terrorism abroad. Not at all: State weighed in against such an indictment on the grounds that Arafat and his colleagues would someday be key to settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict. In this case, a direct American interest—protecting our own diplomats—was shunted aside in favor of taking steps that might help secure peace for Israel.

This makes no sense. A great power like the United States needs to formulate its own policies. The PLO's having repeatedly attacked Americans means we have our own issues to settle with it. The tragic events in Khartoum and a close evaluation of American interests point to keeping open the possibility of taking a harder line on the PLO than Israel. We need not repeal the many anti-PLO regulations now on the books (a temporary waiver will do); nor need we welcome Yasir Arafat again to our shores. If Jerusalem has its own reasons to overlook the PLO's history of murder that doesn't mean we have to do the same. ❐

Daniel Pipes is director of the Middle East Council in Philadelphia.

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AMERICAN ZOOM:
STOCK CAR RACING—FROM DIRT TRACKS TO DAYTONA

Peter Golenbock

Macmillan / 493 pages / $21.95

reviewed by BROCK YATES

Sporting traditions in the old South center on golf, college football, and basketball, with professional baseball and football only late arrivals. But outside that tight circle of socially approved ball-and-stick enthusiasms lies the unsung world of booming, acrid-smelling, 200-mile-an-hour stock-car racing. While the Brahmins still embrace the old games, the nouveaux of the region—the entrepreneurs who built the fast food joints, motel chains, and high-tech businesses that blossom along the interstates like concrete kudzu—have made stock-car racing *the* sport of the New South.

The largest crowds ever assembled in Florida, Georgia, Alabama, and the Carolinas—each exceeding 150,000—have attended events organized not by the NFL or the NCAA but by NASCAR, the Daytona Beach–based stock-car association. The Daytona 500 and the Charlotte World 600 attract international attention and hundreds of millions of dollars. Every major paper in the South has at least one reporter assigned exclusively to the NASCAR beat.

Richard Petty, the greatest of the country-boy celebrities to emerge from this woolly sport, is the most popular personality in the entire South—and that includes all the Atlanta Braves and the Atlanta Falcons, and the hoop stars at Duke and North Carolina. (Petty, now retired, has occasionally hosted "picnics" for his fans at his Randalman, North Carolina headquarters that have drawn over 50,000 people.) Dale Earnhardt, a simple fellow once known as "Iron Head," has won $20 million in prize money alone. Young studs like Rusty Wallace, Ricky Rudd, Kyle Petty (Richard's son), Jeff Gordon, etc. demand fees of more than a million dollars a year just to plant their fire-suited rumps into the bucket seat of a race car. When star drivers Davey Allison and Alan Kulwicki died in aircraft accidents in 1993, the South was plunged into an orgy of sorrow.

Many writers have trekked south to seek the essence of this quintessentially American sport at its grassroots. The masterpiece was Tom Wolfe's 1963 *Esquire* essay, "The Last American Hero Is Junior Johnson. Yes!" Numerous lesser talents (including mine) attempted to sniff along the trail blazed by Wolfe, but thirty years later, his story remains the final word on this uniquely Southern pastime.

When Wolfe ventured south in 1963, stock car racing was a bawdy, brawling world populated by ex-bootleggers, hustlers, shade-tree mechanics, and preposterous Boss Hawg promoters. The sport, after all, had arisen to showcase the driving skills learned by young redneck rum-runners eluding the dreaded "revenuers" in the post-Prohibition thirties and forties. Legendary drivers like Curtis Turner and Junior Johnson began their careers racing souped-up whiskey-hauling 1940 Ford coupes at local bull-ring dirt tracks. (Johnson, who spent two years in the federal pen for his moonshine transporting, proudly notes he was never caught *on the road*.)

Unfortunately, these characters have been replaced by a seamless, highly organized world of megadollar commercial sponsors, major Detroit car manufacturers, and New York television producers. The drivers and cars are now plastered with logos, each worth thousands, if not millions, in promotion dollars. R. J. Reynolds, the sponsor of the Winston Cup, artfully uses the NASCAR races as a valuable means of bypassing the FTC ban on television cigarette advertising. Upon winning a race a driver spews out an automated litany of commercial garble "My Gumbo Fried Chicken, Slick-Streak Oil, Zoom-O Spark Plug, Shiny-Bottom Car Wash, Goodyear Chevrolet Lumina ran perfect today . . ." (In the hard-shell Bible Belt, the Almighty will occasionally also be credited.)

That's too bad for veteran sportswriter Peter Golenbock, whose 500-page homage to the sport adds very little new insight. But even if the spirit of the pre-hustlebuck sixties is long lost, there are still big stories here, and Golenbock has missed them. He might have probed into the shadowy world of sponsorships, the megabuck involvement of the car companies and tire-makers, the enormous television deals, the agents, the merchandising arrangements, the track financing, and the millions spent on luring star drivers from team to team with financial packages that rival the most egregious generated by baseball free agentry.

He might also have treated the byzantine political world of NASCAR, which is capable of jiggering its rules to favor one brand of automobile over another (Fords tend to win for a season, then General Motors). The underlying Southern jingoism of the sport, which demands that teams, drivers, and sponsors somehow act "Southern," is also ignored. This requires northern and western natives like the Wallace brothers, Rusty and Kenny, who are from Missouri, or New Yorkers like the Bodines, Geoff, Brett and Todd, to take up residence in the South and learn to talk with a drawl.

Golenbock leaves the impression that he drifted around Charlotte, North Carolina (where most of the racing teams are headquartered), poking into various race shops and stuffing his tape recorder into the face of anyone who would stand still. The reader is offered little beyond dreary banal recollections of a few crew chiefs, car owners, officials, and several second-tier drivers. Golenbock did manage to collar Johnson and Petty, but both contributed only standard spiels burnished over the span of a thousand earlier interviews. Perhaps Earnhardt, Wallace, and the other major players who don't appear in the book were able to slip out the back door of the garage when they saw Golenbock coming. ❐

Brock Yates is editor-at-large for Car and Driver.

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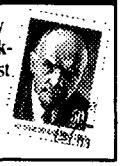

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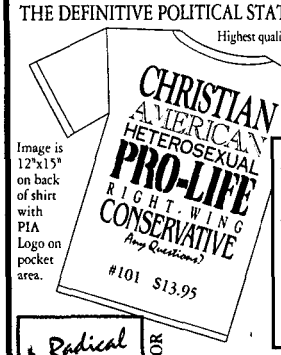

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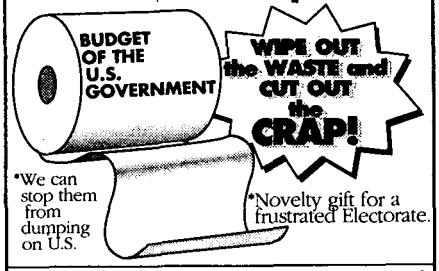

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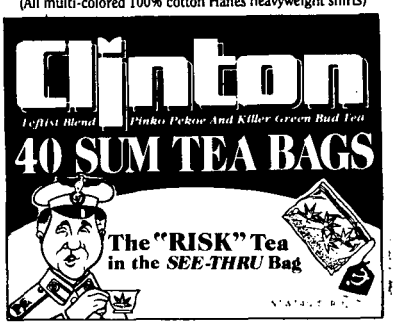

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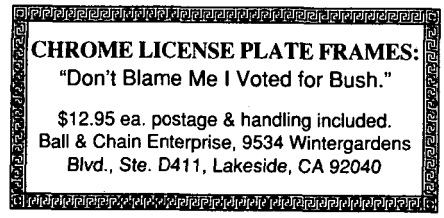
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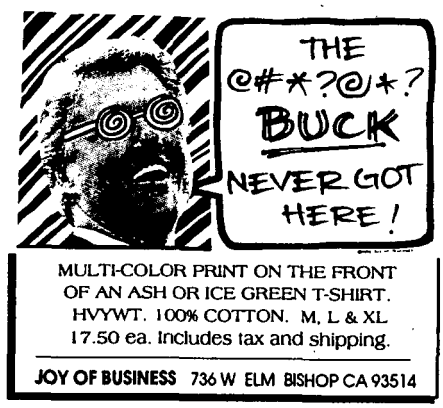
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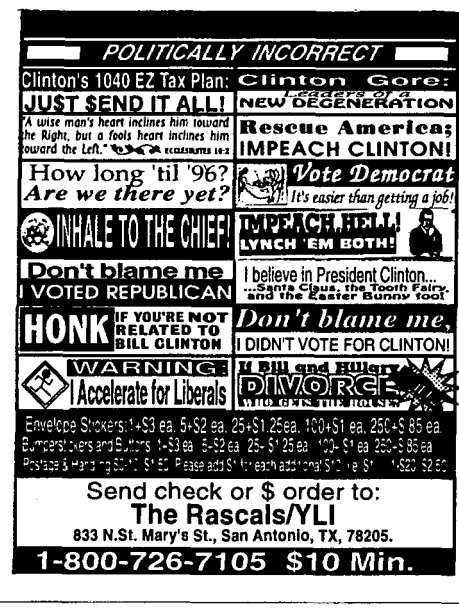
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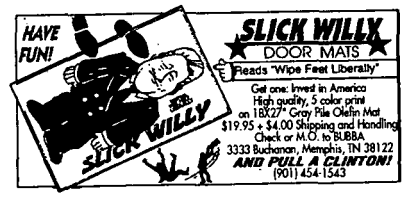
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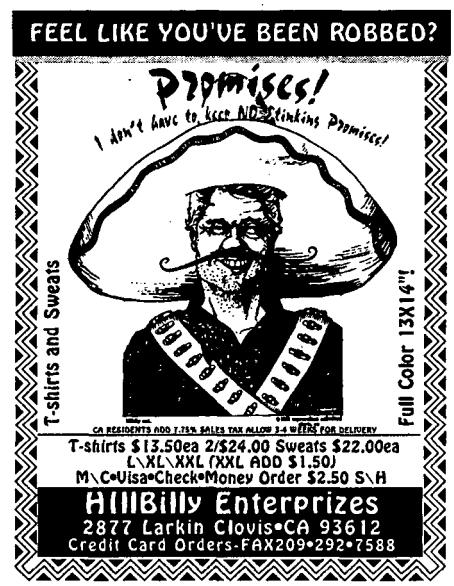
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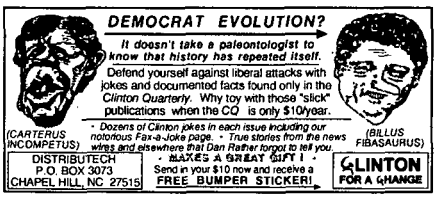
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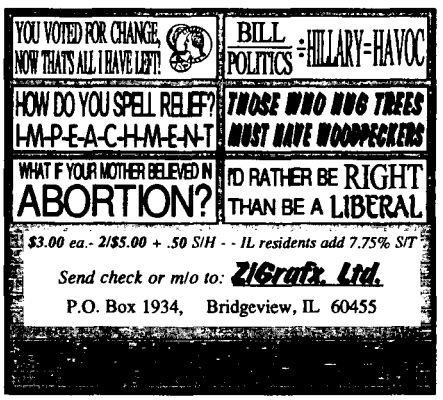
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(continued from page 57)

that Freddy Whitener estimates were worth no more apiece than $1,500 to $3,000. The curiosities continue in November, with post-election payment of invoices to Susan McDougal's ad agency. But the most suggestive check of all is number 239, dated March 22, 1985. It funnels a "commission" of $30,000 into Madison Real Estate, a subsidiary of the thrift that a former officer said was used as a conduit for funds.

This check was cut less than two weeks before a fundraiser for Clinton that has recently aroused a great deal of interest. On April 4, 1985, McDougal sponsored a gathering in the lobby of Madison Guaranty in Little Rock to help retire $50,000 Bill and Hillary had borrowed to donate to the campaign. Some fifty to one-hundred Madison employees and stockholders gathered and contributed about $35,000. Late last year, RTC investigators discovered that some $12,000 of the sum was in the form of cashier's checks from Madison. One of the alleged contributors told the *Washington Post* he never made such a donation. These cashier's checks turned up at the Clinton campaign account in the Bank of Cherry Valley, which recently received a federal subpoena in the Whitewater affair. Campaign records for the event are missing from the Pulaski County clerk's office and may never have been filed.

It's certainly a reasonable hypothesis that the $30,000 commission check is part of this money trail. The special counsel can pursue it through the Madison Real Estate account at Madison Guaranty (Number 3-311-596). If this suspicion pans out, it may turn out that Freddy Whitener lost his house to help pay Bill Clinton's campaign debts.

It is certainly the case that the Whitener account became one of Madison Guaranty's dark secrets. In 1985, McDougal completely removed it from Madison's books, later telling examiners he had sold his share in the partnership. This is news to Freddy, who has papers showing that the partnership was not dissolved until 1986. Madison covered most of the massive overdrafts in the Whitener accounts on February 26 and 28, 1986. This happened to coincide with the start of the federal examination that McDougal mentioned to Hale. It could well be that Hale's "clean-up" loans went toward sanitizing the books on Whitener. It would also explain why the new management at the bank suddenly cut off Whitener's credit and then, when he complained, pretended they had never heard of him.

Some stranger seems to be following Freddy's current business, however. Freddy reports that in December, when he was wavering about telling his story, his phone rang around 5:30 a.m. Half awake, he heard a woman's voice with a "foreign" (i.e., northern) accent; as he best remembers, she said, "Mr. Whitener, you should think more and talk less."

Clinton, Whitener, and Us

One could say that this reconstruction relies on a very narrow window into Madison Guaranty. At the least, these paper trails go through many more steps than we can guess at, and may lead in entirely different directions. Records of Madison Financial, the service corporation, haven't reached the public. Yet, according to a former officer, the overdraft pattern was even more endemic there. Real-estate developments like Maple Creek and Castle Grande were far larger than Whitewater and Gold Mine Springs, and may conceal more.

One can also ask whether any of these revelations will ultimately affect President Clinton's ability to do his job. As a last resort he can argue that the financial shuffles occurred ten or more years ago, and that the furor distracts from his real work. This might be true, if the habits and attitudes that Clinton displayed then toward financial regulation were not such bad omens for current policy.

During the presidential campaign, Clinton harshly criticized bank regulators in a New Hampshire swing and then dodged subsequent questions. But he is now floating a major proposal to reorganize bank supervision, consolidating the patchwork of existing agencies into one bank panel. This proposal has galvanized U.S. Rep. James Leach (R-Iowa) into scrutinizing Whitewater, on the grounds that Clinton is trying to make federal regulation as subservient to the executive as the Arkansas Securities Commission was.

The nation is just now emerging from a recession intensified by the near collapse of the thrift industry and the severe weakening of banking, which in turn resulted from the extremely unwise legislation of the late seventies and early eighties. These bipartisan bills distorted the incentives of the regulatory system; instead of deregulation, they provided a government subsidy for foolish investments. The problem was compounded by widespread political interference on behalf of the worst elements of the financial industry. The Keating Five scandal and the resignation of House Speaker Jim Wright were only two of the most lurid examples.

Clinton's connection with McDougal warns that he learned exactly the wrong lessons from this episode. One of his first regulatory appointments, Stanley Tate as acting president of the Resolution Trust Corporation, set a record for scandal. Tate created such an outcry by his apparent attempts to steer profitable contracts to his friends that he was forced to withdraw his name even before his confirmation hearings. Instead of getting the point, the White House recently distributed a report by Tate, blasting the deficiencies of the RTC.

A consolidated regulatory system under the control of the White House could bring back the worst days of politicization, without the checks that inter-agency rivalry provided on some of its excesses. If this is the legacy of Whitewater, we will all wind up feeling like Freddy Whitener. ❐

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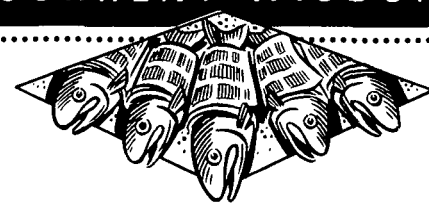

Cleveland Plain Dealer

Neil Chethik, a caring father, fears for his son's future—it's enough to make a grown man cry:

I now have the opportunity to help shape a man.

The day after Thanksgiving, following a smooth pregnancy and a harrowing labor, my wife, Kelly, gave birth to an 8 1/2-pound baby boy. Because of the tense delivery, there was no sweeter sound than Evan's first healthy cry. We cheered and hugged him when it came.

But that could be the last time anyone praises him for his tears. He's a boy, after all, and the world will soon teach him that burying his emotions is part of the price of becoming a man.

[December 19, 1993]

Washington Post

Feminist echolalia in an unlikely locale, the jock pages of the *Post*, as penned by Johnette Howard:

Coarse as it sounds, what happened to Nancy Kerrigan Thursday afternoon is not that out of the ordinary—not if it is taken in its correct context as the sort of violence that is perpetrated by men against women every day, in myriad ways, in places a lot less well-lit or noticed than this week's U.S. Olympic skating trials.

More than the act of a madman or an isolated incident—which is what the Monica Seles attack previously was called—Kerrigan and Seles's cases have infinitely more to do with what happened to former Navy distance runner Kerryn O'Neill last month when she and ex-Navy quarterback Alton Grizzard were slain by George Smith, a classmate who then fatally shot himself because he was angry O'Neill had ended their engagement some weeks previous.

All three cases aren't about what this world is coming to; it seems to me to be about how this world has always been. At least for women.

[January 8, 1994]

Nightline

En route to the Summit, Ted Koppel provides the cheese and Our President produces another whopper:

KOPPEL: Over the past month, you've had a bad time. I mean, it's been—it's been difficult for you, ranging from those Arkansas troopers and their charges, the Whitewater affair, which has just been eating away at the White House staff and, I suspect, at you and Mrs. Clinton, and now your mother's death. . . . How do you find the grit . . . ?

CLINTON: Well, my mother helps me with that, you know. . . . As far as the rest, all the other things have a silver lining. I mean, I've been home twice now and a lot of the people that used to work for me in state government, a lot of the—just the state troopers coming off the highways, you know, would come up to me and slap me on the back and say they supported me, they knew that what was so and what wasn't, that they were with us. . . .

[January 10, 1994]

New York Times Magazine

In a learned symposium on "Does Fashion Matter?" many thoughtful points from Kate Bornstein, who, it's believed, is Bill Clinton's tailor:

My identity as a transsexual lesbian whose female lover has become a man is manifest in my fashion statement: both my identity and fashion are based on a collage. You know—a little bit from here, a little bit from there? Sort of a cut-and-paste thing. What I've found as a result of this borderline lie is that the more fluid my identity has become, and the less demanding my own need to belong to the camps of the male, female, gay or straight, the more playful and less dictatorial has become my fashion. Thank goodness the gender binary has begun to collapse and the old body binary is changing . . . it was so boring and predictable, wasn't it?

[October 24, 1993]

Washington Post

A historic first—columnist Richard Cohen compares Our President to a celebrity Nazi:

Steven Spielberg has given us the movie "Schindler's List." *The American Spectator* has given us a list of its own—two former Arkansas troopers who in turn claim to have a list of Bill Clinton's girlfriends. As former members of the former governor's security detail, they say they not only ferried Clinton to and from his alleged assignations, they occasionally set up these meetings themselves. What would Schindler have made of these stories?

[December 23, 1993]

Carnegie Mellon Magazine

The making of a child abuser:

Even before her children were five years old, Sandra Lipsitz Bem introduced them to cultural stereotypes about gender. When her daughter Emily received her first book of fairy tales, says Bem (MM'65), "I realized that this was the most sexist piece of literature that my daughter had ever seen.

"I made an attempt to vaccinate her against cultural constructions. I explained that these stories were written a long time ago when people had very odd ideas about boys and girls. I said to her, 'I'll bet that in every story there will be someone who is strong and brave, and someone who is either beautiful or ugly. . . .' "

Bem, who believes that it is important for parents to stress that there are really no differences between girls and boys except for the obvious anatomical variations, tells a very entertaining story about her then four-year-old son Jeremy who decided to wear barrettes to nursery school one day. Another little boy repeatedly harassed him, saying that only girls wear barrettes. Jeremy tried to explain what his parents had taught him about gender stereotypes. After getting nowhere with his classmate, Jeremy pulled down his pants to prove his point. The other boy, unimpressed, simply said, "Everybody has a penis. Only girls wear barrettes."

[Fall 1993]

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NEA Today

In one of the foremost intellectual gazettes read by American teachers, the illustrious William Least-Heat Moon, novelist, speaks to the ignoramus in us all:

I believe in genetic memory, that things our ancestors have done are passed on to us. So we inherit not just the color of our hair and the shape of our eyes, but also certain inclinations.

For example, I'm fascinated by stone walls. I never understood why I was almost unable to turn myself away from watching a stonemason at work. Then about five years ago, I found out that my great-great-grandfather was a stonemason on the Erie Canal. I'd never known that.

[December 1993]

San Francisco Chronicle

Miss Leah Garchik, staff writer for the venerable *Chronicle*, reports on the artistic challenges fearlessly faced by another of the gaudy frauds populating America's parasitic Arts World:

If you think it's funny that some guy's planning to hook together a mile's worth of brassieres—linking for the first time such bosom rivals as Lily of France, Vanity Fair, Warner's, Bali, Olga, Maidenform and Vassarette—and string this sisterly chain across the cleavage of the Grand Canyon, that's exactly the reaction he's hoping for.

"Bras Across Grand Canyon will bring a smile to your face," says a statement of purpose by Nicolino, the 53-year-old Richmond performance artist who's hoping to accomplish the feat in the summer or fall of 1995. The work, which will span a mile-wide section of the canyon, will be "participatory art, humorous social commentary and a statement against sexism," he says.

"It's about the puritanical obsession with the breast. It's about breast implants and victimizing the health of women. It's about connecting a woman's self-identity to the size of her breasts. . . . I'm trying to keep it on the humorous side." . . .

The artist, who can be reached at (510) 237-3939, is looking for volunteers of all kinds to help ready the work and install it. Most of all, he's looking for bra agents to solicit donations and maintain contributor lists. "We have about 125 agents nationwide," he said yesterday, "and we need 10 times that amount."

[October 11, 1993]

El Dorado Sun

From old New Mexico, news of a transilient educational experience for all 1960s retreads not currently serving in the Clinton administration:

WHITE PRIVILEGE
an interactive workshop for white people to examine their daily experience of white skin privilege and how to use that privilege to challenge racism

(Saturday, December 4, 1993)

Facilitated by Joan Olsson
Director, Cultural Bridges, NY

"We did not choose our skin color—yet as white people, our daily lives are influenced by white skin privilege. What exactly is white privilege? How do we, as white people, collude with the cycle of racism that oppresses people of color? How can we break that cycle? How do we learn to spend our white privilege with integrity?"

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North Room, Cloud Cliff Bakery, 1805 2nd St.
Santa Fe Sponsor: Kay Leigh Hagan
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**Sliding scale: $25-$55+. Please pay as much as you can to enable others to attend, and to support Joan's important work.*
[November 17, 1993]

SF Weekly

Food for thought, on the pages of San Francisco's challenge to the *New York Review of Books*:

I guess everyone's begun to realize a simple truth: It's dangerous on top of the food chain. As the economy freezes over and the level of affluence goes down and the bitter social shoreline is exposed, certain highly specialized creatures are threatened with extinction.

The most important cultural event of 1993 provides a perfect illustration of this. The event, of course, is the symbolic consummation, the Passion, in a biblical sense, of Michael Jackson. I believe it was David Spade's rude character on *Saturday Night Live* who first made the Jackson-as-foodstuff concept explicit. "Put a fork in yourself, Michael," he said. "You're done." Jackson, it now becomes obvious, was being fattened for sacrifice over a period of many years, and now it is time for the feast. His body, like that of any self-respecting sacrificial victim, has been ritually altered, and his personality has transcended the boundaries between male and female. Heck, he may even be a virgin. Into the volcano he goes!

Still more blah from the same incontinent source:

It seems that Hillary consciously makes herself a moving target, while previous presidential wives often projected a simpler identity. In her straitlaced and mainstream way, she embraces gender-bending with all the enthusiasm of a combat-boots-and-lipstick grrrl. She chooses, very deliberately, to create an image that blends traditional markers of masculinity (toughness, immersion in public policy) with the most conventional signs of femininity (nurturance, concern with home and hearth). Her mélange of butch and femme may be more muted than that of your basic gender radical—and most of the femme effects come off as calculated political moves—but it draws on a similar spirit of mix-and-match role-playing. *Spy* once featured a doctored image of Hillary-as-dominatrix on its cover, but you can be sure that if S/M were her thing, our First Lady would be an enthusiastic "switch," delighting equally in the top and bottom roles.

[December 29, 1993]

Marquette University

A great institution of higher learning deinstitutionalizes its mascot:

As you may know, Marquette has decided to select a new nickname for our sports teams—one that makes no reference to ethnicity and gender. The change will be effective after the 1993-94 academic year, when we will adopt a nickname, logo and mascot which can be effectively utilized by the University and its Department of Intercollegiate Athletics and Recreational Sports. . . .

Marquette's Jesuit, Catholic heritage emphasizes care and respect for all people. For over a year, a committee of students, alumni and administrators discussed the mascot, logo and nickname of the University's athletic teams. After a review of the committee's work and further discussion, the University administration decided the current nickname and logo were not in harmony with our long-standing respect for Native American tradition. While the term "warriors" is generic, it has been identified inseparably with Native Americans since its adoption as a nickname at Marquette. It was also determined that neither the Warriors name nor logo adequately represents our expanded men's and women's athletic program. It is also important to note that this was not done in response to any outside pressure. Actually, there was no such pressure.

[November 3, 1993]

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Sherping

by David Brooks

This is the year Bill Clinton discovers the joys of global summitry. He attended a NATO summit in January, he's got a European summit in June, and there's still talk of a job summit in between. Whereas the usual wrangling of domestic politics will become demeaning—and the unusual demands of scandal become downright tawdry—summitry offers numerous and lasting joys.

Chief among these, perhaps, is the chance to dress up in a blue suit and red tie and stand in a row with other world leaders so that hundreds of photographers can snap the identical picture. The message of these photo lineups, which are the pictorial highlight of every summit, is that an awesome array of power has been assembled in one place, as if Ruth, Mantle, Mays, and Aaron had been captured dining together. The arrangement has the outstanding merit of reminding everyone that François Mitterrand is really quite short by world-leader standards. In fact, if it weren't for Mitterrand's fear of being the puniest, Italy wouldn't even be allowed to be a member of the G-7.

Another reason the president will come to love summits is that for all their drama they always have a happy ending. Summits are played out in four movements: In the first, pre-summit phase, there are stories in the press on the tremendous obstacles blocking an agreement between world leaders and on the awful ramifications if no agreement is reached. The second movement begins with the summit's opening social event and consists of minute analysis of the moods and positions of the various participants. These moods are deduced from the brief glimpses reporters get of the leaders as they dash from limo to palace door. The third news cycle, during which actual meetings take place, is dominated by skeptical reporters explaining to their audiences that these summits are merely empty gabfests.

The fourth and climactic movement comes late on the final night, with the announcement of the triumphant breakthrough. Reporters, dismissive 24 hours before, wait long into the night until the final communiqué is issued. There are massive press conferences with smiling politicians and then the mandarins come down for off-the-record briefings. Each nation gives its own insider briefing at which it explains how it "won" the summit. The substance of the actual agreement will remain fuzzy, because the leaders have not in fact *reached* an agreement: they have merely found words to put into the final communiqué that no nation can object to: "G-7 Leaders decide to 'Go for Growth,'" or "Industrialized Nations Vow to Cooperate."

The only real requirement for a summit is that it succeed. After one European summit to end the war in former Yugoslavia, British Prime Minister John Major declared that the meeting had been "hugely successful." One might have thought that for a peace summit on Yugoslavia to have been hugely successful, it would have had to contribute peace in Yugoslavia.

The wonkish staff members who make all this sleight-of-hand possible are known as sherpas. The act of pretending to be engaged in a serious discussion with world leaders is "to sherp."

Sherpas are a strange breed, and are in their element during global summits. One of the most interesting things about them is their hobbies. Sherpas choose their hobbies with care, in part as a talking point in case any journalists should ever want to do a newspaper profile, in part because they think an impressive hobby adds to their mystique. The Swiss diplomat Edouard Brunner paints lead toy soldiers, a hobby that is endearing, yet with an aroma of Bismarckian realpolitik. Felipe González, the sherpa who amazingly has become the Spanish head of state, cultivates bonsais, which suggests fastidiousness and contemplation. Less pretentious sherpas have simply stuck with their student-day anti-weenie hobbies: John Major's private secretary, Alex Allen, is known for his passion for the Grateful Dead.

Sherpas are difficult to engage in conversation, mostly because of their tendency to steer conversations back to such arcane matters as the need for an efficient payments-clearing system. Worse, they are clearly in the habit of being in the company of people who know what a payments-clearing system is. When they and their buddies get together, they probably make wry little comments about the Italian payments-clearing system; the Spanish payments-clearing system sends them into gales of laughter. The Germans among them talk at great length about the virtues of the German payments-clearing system, and then they hug each other and cry.

The sherpas speak a dialect called Business Class English, the lingua franca of the global establishment. The language is based on English, but is without any idiomatic expressions or colorful words that cannot be translated easily into any other language. One of the oddities of this language is that it contains no words for bird or plant life but twenty-six expressions for the phrase "reinventing government."

The real question, then, is not how Bill Clinton could have been prevailed upon to travel to Europe last month during the worst presidential scandal in twenty years, but how anybody ever managed to drag him away. ❐

David Brooks is deputy editorial page editor of the Wall Street Journal Europe.

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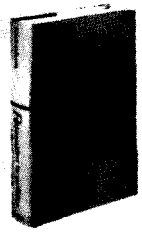

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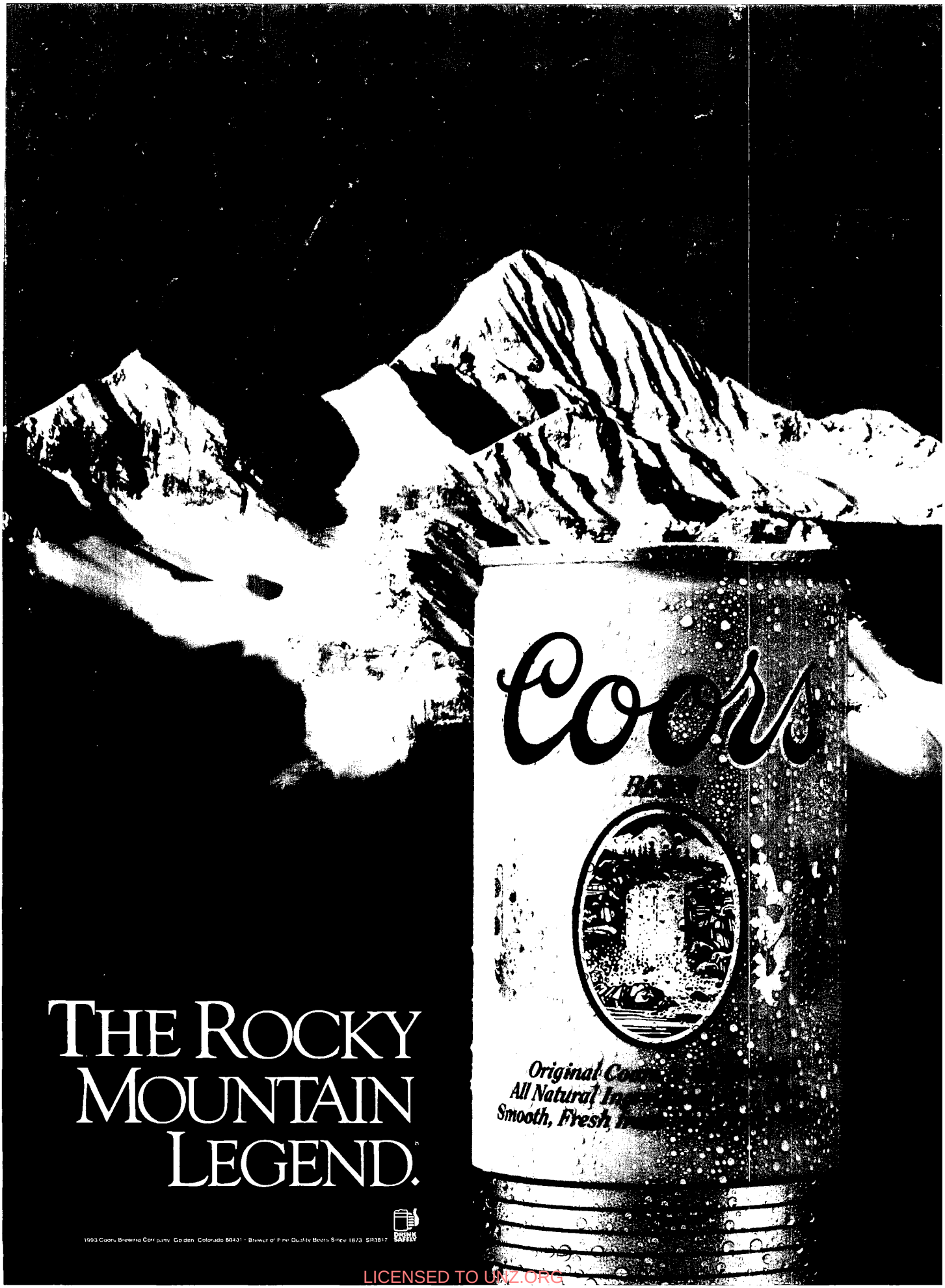
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